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WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT

BY PISISTRATUS CAXTON

A Novel

BY

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.

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WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

BOOK FOURTH.

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER VII.

A Sham carries off the Reality.

And she did act, and how charmingly! with what glee and what gusto! Rugge was beside himself with pride and rapture. He could hardly perform his own Baronial part for admiration. The audience, a far choicer and more fastidious one than that in the Surrey village, was amazed, enthusiastic.

"I shall live to see my dream come true! I shall have the great York Theater!" said Rugge, as he took off his wig and laid his head on his pillow. "Restore her for the £100! not for thousands!"

Alas, my sweet Sophy, alas! Has not the joy that made thee perform so well, undone thee? Ah! hadst thou but had the wit to act horribly, and be hissed!

"Uprose the sun, and uprose Baron Rugge."

Not that ordinarily he was a very early man; but his excitement broke his slumbers. He had taken up his

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quarters on the ground floor of a small lodging-house close to his Exhibition; in the same house lodged his senior Matron, and Sophy herself. Mrs. Gormerick being ordered to watch the child, and never lose sight of her, slept in the same room with Sophy, in the upper story of the house. The old woman served Rugge for housekeeper, made his tea, grilled his chop, and for company's sake shared his meals. Excitement as often sharpens the appetite as it takes it away. Rugge had supped on hope, and he felt a craving for a more substantial breakfast. Accordingly, when he had dressed, he thrust his head into the passage, and seeing there the maid-of-all-work unbarring the street door, bade her go up stairs and wake the Hag, that is, Mrs. Gormerick. Saying this, he extended a key; for he ever took the precaution, before retiring to rest, to lock the door of the room to which Sophy was consigned, on the outside, and guard the key till the next morning.

The maid nodded, and ascended the stairs. Less time than he expected passed away before Mrs. Gormerick made her appearance, her gray hair streaming under her night-cap, her form endued in a loose wrapper — her very face a tragedy.

"Powers above! What has happened?" exclaimed Rugge, prophetically.

"She is gone!" sobbed Mrs. Gormerick; and seeing the lifted arm and clenched fist of the manager, prudently fainted away.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Corollaries from the problem suggested in Chapters VI. and VII.

Broad daylight, nearly nine o'clock indeed, and Jasper Losely is walking back to his inn from the place at which he had dined the evening before. He has spent the night drinking, gambling, and though he looks heated, there is no sign of fatigue. Nature in wasting on this man many of her most glorious elements of happiness, had not forgotten a Herculean constitution — always restless and never tired, always drinking and never drunk. Certainly it is some consolation to delicate individuals, that it seldom happens that the sickly are very wicked. Criminals are generally athletic — constitution and conscience equally tough; large backs to their heads — strong suspensorial muscles — digestions that save them from the over-fine nerves of the virtuous. The native animal must be vigorous in the human being, when the moral safeguards are daringly overleaped. Jasper was not alone, but with an acquaintance he had made at the dinner, and whom he invited to his inn at breakfast; they were walking familiarly arm in arm. Very unlike the brilliant Losely — a young man under thirty, who seemed to have washed out all the colors of youth in dirty water. His eyes dull, their whites yellow; his complexion sodden. His form

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was thick-set and heavy; his features pug, with a cross of the bull-dog. In dress, a specimen of the flash style of sporting man, as exhibited on the turf, or more often, perhaps, in the Ring; Belcher neckcloth, with an immense pin representing a jockey at full gallop; cut away coat, corduroy breeches, and boots with tops of a chalky white. Yet, withal, not the air and walk of a genuine born and bred sporting man, even of the vulgar order. Something about him which reveals the pretender. A would-be hawk with a pigeon's liver — a would-be sportsman with a cockney's nurture.

Samuel Adolphus Poole is an orphan of respectable connections. His future expectations chiefly rest on an uncle from whom, as godfather, he takes the loathed name of Samuel. He prefers to sign himself Adolphus; he is popularly styled Dolly. For his present existence he relies ostensibly on his salary as an assistant in the house of a London tradesman in a fashionable way of business. Mr. Latham, his employer, has made a considerable fortune, less by his shop than by discounting the bills of his customers, or of other borrowers whom the loan draws into the net of the custom. Mr. Latham connives at the sporting tastes of Dolly Poole. Dolly has often thus been enabled to pick up useful pieces of information as to the names and repute of such denizens of the sporting world as might apply to Mr. Latham for temporary accommodation. Dolly Poole has many sporting friends; he has also many debts. He has been a dupe, he is now a rogue; but he wants decision of char-

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acter to put into practice many valuable ideas that his experience of dupe and his development into rogue suggest to his ambition. Still, however, now and then, whenever a shabby trick can be safely done he is what he calls "lucky." He has conceived a prodigious admiration for Jasper Losely, one cause for which will be explained in the dialogue about to be recorded; another cause for which is analogous to that loving submission with which some ill-conditioned brute acknowledges a master in the hand that has thrashed it. For at Losely's first appearance at the convivial meeting just concluded, being nettled at the imperious airs of superiority which that roysterer assumed, mistaking for effeminacy Jasper's elaborate dandyism, and not recognizing in the bravo's elegant proportions the tiger-like strength of which, in truth, that tiger-like suppleness should have warned him, Dolly Poole provoked a quarrel, and being himself a stout fellow, nor unaccustomed to athletic exercises, began to spar; the next moment he was at the other end of the room, full sprawl on the floor; and, two minutes afterward, the quarrel made up by conciliating banqueters, with every bone in his skin seeming still to rattle, he was generously blubbering out that he never bore malice, and shaking hands with Jasper Losely as if he had found a benefactor. But now to the dialogue.

JASPER. "Yes, Poole, my hearty, as you say, that fellow trumping my best club lost me the last rubber. There's no certainty in whist, if one has a spoon for a partner."

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POOLE. "No certainty in every rubber, but next to certainty in the long run, when a man plays as well as you do, Mr. Losely. Your winnings to-night must have been pretty large, though you had a bad partner almost every hand; — pretty large — eh?"

JASPER (carelessly). "Nothing to talk of — a few ponies!"

POOLE. "More than a few; I should know."

JASPER. "Why? You did not play after the first rubber."

POOLE. "No, when I saw your play on that first rubber, I cut out, and bet on you; and very grateful to you I am. Still you would win more with a partner who understood your game."

The shrewd Dolly paused a moment, and leaning significantly on Jasper's arm, added, in a half whisper, "I do; it is a French one."

Jasper did not change color, but a quick rise of the eyebrow, and a slight jerk of the neck, betrayed some little surprise or uneasiness; however, he rejoined without hesitation — "French, ay! In France there is more dash in playing out trumps than there is with English players."

"And with a player like you," said Poole, still in a half whisper, "more trumps to play out."

Jasper turned round sharp and short; the hard, cruel expression of his mouth, little seen of late, came back to it. Poole recoiled, and his bones began again to ache. "I did not mean to offend you, Mr. Losely, but to caution."

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"Caution!"

"There were two knowing coves, who, if they had not been so drunk, would not have lost their money without a row, and they would have seen *how* they lost it; they are sharpers — you served them right — don't be angry with me. You want a partner — so do I; you play better than I do, but I play well; you shall have two-thirds of our winnings, and when you come to town I'll introduce you to a pleasant set of young fellows — green."

Jasper mused a moment. "You know a thing or two, I see, Master Poole, and we'll discuss the whole subject after breakfast. Arn't you hungry? — No! — I am! Hillo! who's that?"

His arm was seized by Mr. Rugge. "She's gone — fled!" gasped the manager, breathless. "Out of the lattice — fifteen feet high — not dashed to pieces — vanished!"

"Go on and order breakfast," said Losely to Mr. Poole, who was listening too inquisitively. He drew the manager away. "Can't you keep your tongue in your head before strangers? the girl is gone!"

"Out of the lattice, and fifteen feet high!"

"Any sheets left hanging out of the lattice?"

"Sheets! No."

"Then she did not go without help — somebody must have thrown up to her a rope-ladder — nothing so easy — done it myself scores of times for the descent of 'maids who love the moon,' Mr. Rugge. But at her age there is not a moon — at least there is not a man in the moon;

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one must dismiss, then, the idea of a rope-ladder — too precocious. But are you quite sure she is gone? not hiding in some cupboard? *Sacre!* — very odd. Have you seen Mrs. Crane about it?"

"Yes, just come from her; she thinks that villain Waife must have stolen her. But I want you, Sir, to come with me to a magistrate."

"Magistrate! I — why? — nonsense — set the police to work."

"Your deposition that she is your lawful child, lawfully made over to me, is necessary for the Inquisition — I mean Police."

"Hang it, what a bother! I hate magistrates, and all belonging to them. Well, I must breakfast; I'll see to it afterward. Oblige me by not calling Mr. Waife a villain — good old fellow in his way."

"Good! Powers above!"

"But if he took her off, how did he get at her? It must have been preconcerted."

"Ha! true. But she has not been suffered to speak to a soul not in the company — Mrs. Crane excepted."

"Perhaps at the performance last night some signal was given?"

"But if Waife had been there I should have seen him; my troop would have known him; such a remarkable face — one eye, too."

"Well, well, do what you think best. I'll call on you after breakfast; let me go now. *Basta! basta!*"

Losely wrenched himself from the manager, and strode

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off to the inn; then, ere joining Poole, he sought Mrs. Crane.

"This going before a magistrate," said Losely, "to depose that I have made over my child to that blackguard showman — in this town, too — after such luck as I have had, and where bright prospects are opening on me, is most disagreeable. And supposing, when we have traced Sophy, she should be really with the old man — awkward! In short, my dear friend, my dear Bella" (Losely could be very coaxing when it was worth his while), "you just manage this for me. I have a fellow in the next room waiting to breakfast; as soon as breakfast is over I shall be off to the race-ground, and so shirk that ranting old bore; you'll call on him instead, and settle it somehow." He was out of the room before she could answer.

Mrs. Crane found it no easy matter to soothe the infuriate manager, when he heard Losely was gone to amuse himself at the race-course. Nor did she give herself much trouble to pacify Mr. Rugge's anger, or assist his investigations. Her interest in the whole affair seemed over. Left thus to his own devices, Rugge, however, began to institute a sharp, and what promised to be an effective, investigation. He ascertained that the fugitive certainly had not left by the railway, or by any of the public conveyances; he sent scouts over all the neighborhood; he enlisted the sympathy of the police, who confidently assured him that they had "a net-work over the three kingdoms;" no doubt they have, and we pay

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for it; but the meshes are so large that anything less than a whale must be silly indeed if it consent to be caught. Rugge's suspicions were directed to Waife — he could collect, however, no evidence to confirm them. No person answering to Waife's description had been seen in the town. Once, indeed, Rugge was close on the right scent; for, insisting upon Waife's one eye and his possession of a white dog, he was told by several witnesses that a man blind of two eyes, and led by a black dog, had been close before the stage, just previous to the performance. But then the clown had spoken to that very man; all the Thespian company had observed him; all of them had known Waife familiarly for years; and all deposed that any creature more unlike to Waife than the blind man could not be turned out of Nature's workshop. But where was that blind man? They found out the wayside inn in which he had taken a lodging for the night; and there it was ascertained that he had paid for his room beforehand, stating that he should start for the race-course early in the morning. Rugge himself set out to the race-course to kill two birds with one stone—catch Mr. Losely — examine the blind man himself.

He did catch Mr. Losely, and very nearly caught something else — for that gentleman was in a ring of noisy horsemen, mounted on a hired hack, and loud as the noisiest. When Rugge came up to his stirrup, and began his harangue, Losely turned his hack round with so sudden an appliance of bit and spur that the animal lashed out, and its heel went within an inch of the mana-

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ger's cheek-bone. Before Rugge could recover Losely was in a hand gallop. But the blind man! Of course Rugge did not find him? You are mistaken; he did. The blind man was there, dog and all. The manager spoke to him, and did not know him from Adam.

Nor have you or I, my venerated readers, any right whatsoever to doubt whether Mr. Rugge could be so stolidly obtuse. Granting that blind sailor to be the veritable William Waife—William Waife was a man of genius, taking pains to appear an ordinary mortal. And the anecdotes of Munden, or of Bamfylde Moore Carew, suffice to tell us how Protean is the power of transformation in a man whose genius is mimetic. But how often does it happen to us, venerated readers, not to recognize a man of genius, even when he takes no particular pains to escape detection! A man of genius may be for ten years our next-door neighbor—he may dine in company with us twice a week—his face may be as familiar to our eyes as our arm-chair—his voice to our ears as the click of our parlor-clock—yet we are never more astonished than when all of a sudden, some bright day, it is discovered that our next-door neighbor is—a man of genius. Did you ever hear tell of the life of a man of genius, but what there were numerous witnesses who deposed to the fact, that until, perfidious dissembler, he flared up and set the Thames on fire, they had never seen any thing in him—an odd creature, perhaps a good creature—probably a poor creature—But a MAN of GENIUS! They would as soon have suspected him of being the Cham of Tartary!

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Nay, candid readers, are there not some of you who refuse to the last to recognize the man of genius, till he has paid his penny to Charon, and his passport to immortality has been duly examined by the custom-house officers of Styx! When one half the world drag forth that same next-door neighbor, place him on a pedestal, and have him cried, "O yez! O yez! Found a man of genius! Public property — open to inspection!" does not the other half the world put on its spectacles, turn up its nose, and cry, "*That* a man of genius, indeed! Pelt him!—pelt him!" Then of course there is a clatter, what the vulgar call "a shindy," round the pedestal. Squeezed by his believers, shied at by his scoffers, the poor man gets horribly mauled about, and drops from the perch in the midst of the row. Then they shovel him over, clap a great stone on his relics, wipe their foreheads, shake hands, compromise the dispute, the one half the world admitting that though he was a genius, he was still an ordinary man; the other half allowing that though he was an ordinary man, he was still a genius. And so on to the next pedestal with its "Hic stet," and the next great stone with its "Hic jacet."

The manager of the Grand Theatrical Exhibition gazed on the blind sailor, and did not know him from Adam!

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CHAPTER IX.

The aboriginal Man-eater, or Pocket-Cannibal, is susceptible of the refining influences of Civilization. He decorates his lair with the skins of his victims; he adorns his person with the spoils of those whom he devours. Mr. Losely introduced to Mr. Poole's friends—dresses for dinner; and, combining elegance with appetite, eats them up.

ELATED with the success which had rewarded his talents for pecuniary speculation, and dismissing from his mind all thoughts of the fugitive Sophy and the spoliated Rugge, Jasper Losely returned to London in company with his new friend, Mr. Poole. He left Arabella Crane to perform the same journey, unattended; but that grim lady, carefully concealing any resentment at such want of gallantry, felt assured that she should not be long in London without being honored by his visits.

In renewing their old acquaintance, Mrs. Crane had contrived to establish over Jasper that kind of influence which a vain man, full of schemes that are not to be told to all the world, but which it is convenient to discuss with some confidential friend who admires himself too highly not to respect his secrets, mechanically yields to a woman whose wits are superior to his own.

It is true that Jasper, on his return to the metropolis, was not magnetically attracted toward Poddon Place; nay, days and even weeks elapsed, and Mrs. Crane was

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not gladdened by his presence. But she knew that her influence was only suspended — not extinct. The body attracted was for the moment kept from the body attracting by the abnormal weights that had dropped into its pockets. Restore the body thus temporarily counterpoised to its former lightness, and it would turn to Poddon Place as the needle to the Pole. Meanwhile, oblivious of all such natural laws, the disloyal Jasper had fixed himself as far from the reach of the magnet as from Bloomsbury's remotest verge is St. James's animated center. The apartment he engaged was showy and commodious. He added largely to his wardrobe — his dressing-case — his trinket-box. Nor, be it here observed, was Mr. Losely one of those beauish brigands who wear tawdry scarfs over soiled linen, and paste rings upon unwashed digitals. To do him justice, the man, so stony-hearted to others, loved and cherished his own person with exquisite tenderness, lavished upon it delicate attentions, and gave to it the very best he could afford. He was no coarse debauchee, smelling of bad cigars and ardent spirits. Cigars, indeed, were not among his vices (at worst the rare peccadillo of a *cigarette*)—spirit-drinking was; but the monster's digestion was still so strong, that he could have drunk out a gin palace, and you would only have sniffed the jasmin or heliotrope on the dainty cambric that wiped the last drop from his lips. Had his soul been a tenth part as clean as the form that belied it, Jasper Losely had been a saint! His apartments secured, his appearance thus revised and embellished, Jasper's

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next care was an equipage in keeping; he hired a smart cabriolet with a high-stepping horse, and, to go behind it, a groom whose size had been stunted in infancy by provident parents designing him to earn his bread in the stables as a light-weight, and therefore mingling his mother's milk with heavy liquors. In short, Jasper Losely set up to be a buck about town; in that capacity Dolly Poole introduced him to several young gentlemen who combined commercial vocations with sporting tastes; they could not but participate in Poole's admiring and somewhat envious respect for Jasper Losely. There was indeed about the vigorous miscreant a great deal of false brilliancy. Deteriorated from earlier youth though the beauty of his countenance might be, it was still undeniably handsome; and as force of muscle is beauty in itself in the eyes of young sporting men, so Jasper dazzled many a *gracilis puer*, who had the ambition to become an athlete, with the rare personal strength which, as if in the exuberance of animal spirits, he would sometimes condescend to display, by feats that astonished the curious and frightened the timid — such as bending a poker or horse-shoe, between hands elegantly white nor unadorned with rings — or lifting the weight of Samuel Dolly by the waistband, and holding him at arm's-length, with a playful bet of ten to one that he could stand by the fire-place and pitch the said Samuel Dolly out of the open window. To know so strong a man, so fine an animal, was something to boast of! Then, too, if Jasper had a false brilliancy, he had also a false *bonhommie;* it

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was true that he was somewhat imperious, swaggering, bullying — but he was also off-hand and jocund; and as you knew him, that sidelong look, that defying gait (look and gait of the man whom the world cuts), wore away. In fact, he had got into a world which did not cut him, and his exterior was improved by the atmosphere.

Mr. Losely professed to dislike general society. Drawing-rooms were insipid; clubs full of old fogies. "I am for life, my boys," said Mr. Losely:

> "'Can sorrow from the goblet flow,
> Or pain from Beauty's eye?'"

Mr. Losely, therefore, his hat on one side, lounged into the saloons of theaters, accompanied by a cohort of juvenile admirers, their hats on one side also, and returned to the pleasantest little suppers in his own apartment. There "the goblet" flowed — and after the goblet, cigars for some, and a rubber for all.

So puissant Losely's vitality, and so blessed by the stars his luck, that his form seemed to wax stronger and his purse fuller by this "life." No wonder he was all for a life of that kind; but the slight beings who tried to keep up with him grew thinner and thinner, and poorer and poorer; a few weeks made their cheeks spectral and their pockets a dismal void. Then, as some dropped off from sheer inanition, others whom they had decoyed by their praises of "Life" and its hero, came into the magic circle to fade and vanish in their turn.

In a space of time incredibly brief not a whist-player was left upon the field; the victorious Losely had trumped

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out the last! Some few, whom Nature had endowed more liberally than Fortune, still retained strength enough to sup — if asked;

"But none who came to sup remained to play."

"Plague on it," said Losely to Poole, as one afternoon they were dividing the final spoils. "Your friends are mightily soon cleaned out; could not even get up double dummy, last night; and we must hit on some new plan for replenishing the coffers! You have rich relations; can't I help you to make them more useful?"

Said Dolly Poole, who was looking exceedingly bilious, and had become a martyr to chronic headache, "My relations are prigs! Some of them give me the cold shoulder, others — a great deal of jaw. But as for tin, I might as well scrape a flint for it. My uncle Sam is more anxious about my sins than the other codgers, because he is my godfather, and responsible for my sins, I suppose; and he says he will put me in the way of being respectable. My head's splitting —"

"Wood does split till it is seasoned," answered Losely. "Good fellow, uncle Sam! He'll put you in the way of tin; nothing else makes a man respectable."

"Yes — so he says; a girl with money —"

"A wife — tin canister! Introduce me to her, and she shall be tied to you."

Samuel Dolly did not appear to relish the idea of such an introduction. "I have not been introduced to her myself," said he. "But if you advise me to be spliced, why don't you get spliced yourself? a handsome fellow like you can be at no loss for an heiress."

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"Heiresses are the most horrid cheats in the world," said Losely: "there is always some father, or uncle, or fusty Lord Chancellor whose consent is essential, and not to be had. Heiresses in scores have been over head and ears in love with me. Before I left Paris, I sold their locks of hair to a wig-maker — three great trunksful. Honor bright. But there were only two whom I could have safely allowed to run away with me; and they were so closely watched, poor things, that I was forced to leave them to their fate — early graves! Don't talk to me of heiresses, Dolly, I have been the victim of heiresses. But a rich widow is an estimable creature. Against widows, if rich, I have not a word to say; and to tell you the truth, there is a widow whom I suspect I have fascinated, and whose connection I have a particular private reason for deeming desirable! She has a whelp of a son, who is a spoke in my wheel — were I his father-in-law, would not I be a spoke in his? I'd teach the boy '*life*,' Dolly." Here all trace of beauty vanished from Jasper's face, and Poole, staring at him, pushed away his chair. "But" — continued Losely, regaining his more usual expression of levity and boldness — "But I am not yet quite sure what the widow has, besides her son, in her own possession; we shall see. Meanwhile, is there — *no* chance of a rubber to-night?"

"None! unless you will let Brown and Smith play upon tick."

'Pooh! but there's Robinson, he has an aunt he can borrow from?"

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"Robinson! spitting blood, with an attack of *delirium tremens!* — you have done for him."

"Can sorrow from the goblet flow?" said Losely. "Well, I suppose it can — when a man has no coats to his stomach; but you and I, Dolly Poole, have stomachs thick as pea-jackets, and proof as gutta percha."

Poole forced a ghastly smile, while Losely, gayly springing up, swept his share of booty into his pockets, slapped his comrade on the back, and said — "Then, if the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go the mountain! Hang whist, and up with *rouge-et-noir!* I have an infallible method of winning — only, it requires capital. You will club your cash with mine, and I'll play for both. Sup here to-night, and we'll go to the —— hell afterward."

Samuel Dolly had the most perfect confidence in his friend's science in the art of gambling, and he did not, therefore, dissent from the proposal made. Jasper gave a fresh touch to his toilet, and stepped into his cabriolet. Poole cast on him a look of envy, and crawled to his lodging — too ill for his desk, and with a strong desire to take to his bed.

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CHAPTER X.

"Is there a heart that never loved
Nor felt soft woman's sigh?"

If there be such a heart, it is not in the breast of a Pocket-Cannibal. Your true Man-eater is usually of an amorous temperament: he can be indeed sufficiently fond of a lady to eat her up. Mr. Losely makes the acquaintance of a widow. For farther particulars inquire within.

THE dignified serenity of Gloucester Place, Portman Square, is agitated by the intrusion of a new inhabitant. A house in that favored locality, which had for several months maintained "the solemn stillness and the dread repose" which appertain to dwellings that are to be let upon lease, unfurnished, suddenly started into that exuberant and aggressive life which irritates the nerves of its peaceful neighbors. The bills have been removed from the windows — the walls have been cleaned down and pointed — the street-door repainted a lively green — workmen have gone in and out. The observant ladies (single ones) in the house opposite, discover, by the help of a telescope, that the drawing-rooms have been new papered, canary-colored ground — festoon borders, and that the mouldings of the shutters have been gilt. Gilt shutters! that looks ominous of an ostentatious and party-giving tenant.

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Then carts full of furniture have stopped at the door—carpets, tables, chairs, beds, wardrobes—all seemingly new, and in no inelegant taste, have been disgorged into the hall. It has been noticed, too, that every day a lady of slight figure and genteel habiliments has come, seemingly to inspect progress — evidently the new tenant. Sometimes she comes alone; sometimes with a dark-eyed handsome lad, probably her son. Who can she be? what is she? what is her name? her history? has she a right to settle in Gloucester Place, Portman Square? The detective police of London is not peculiarly vigilant; but its defects are supplied by the voluntary efforts of unmarried ladies. The new-comer was a widow; her husband had been in the army; of good family; but a *mauvais sujet;* she had been left in straitened circumstances with an only son. It was supposed that she had unexpectedly come into a fortune — on the strength of which she had removed from Pimlico into Gloucester Place. At length — the preparations completed — one Monday afternoon the widow, accompanied by her son, came to settle. The next day a footman in genteel livery (brown and orange) appeared at the door. Then, for the rest of the week, the baker and butcher called regularly. On the following Sunday the lady and her son appeared at church.

No reader will be at a loss to discover in the new tenant of No. — Gloucester Place, the widowed mother of Lionel Haughton. The letter for that lady which Darrell had intrusted to his young cousin, had, in complimentary and cordial language, claimed the right to provide for her

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comfortable and honorable subsistence; and announced that, henceforth, £800 a year would be placed quarterly to her account at Mr. Darrell's banker, and that an additional sum of £1200 was already there deposited in her name, in order to enable her to furnish any residence to which she might be inclined to remove. Mrs. Haughton, therewith, had removed to Gloucester Place.

She is seated by the window in her front drawing-room — surveying with proud though grateful heart, the elegancies by which she is surrounded. A very winning countenance—lively eyes, that in themselves may be overquick and petulant, but their expression is chastened by a gentle kindly mouth; and over the whole face, the attitude, the air, even the dress itself, is diffused the unmistakable simplicity of a sincere, natural character. No doubt Mrs. Haughton has her tempers, and her vanities, and her little harmless feminine weaknesses; but you could not help feeling in her presence that you were with an affectionate, warm-hearted, honest, good woman. She might not have the refinements of tone and manner which stamp the high-bred gentlewoman of convention; she might evince the deficiencies of an imperfect third-rate education; but she was saved from vulgarity by a certain undefinable grace of person and music of voice — even when she said or did things that well-bred people do not say or do; and there was an engaging intelligence in those quick hazel eyes that made you sure that she was sensible, even when she uttered what was silly.

Mrs. Haugton turned from the interior of the room to

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the open window. She is on the look-out for her son, who has gone to call on Colonel Morley, and who ought to be returned by this time. She begins to get a little fidgety—somewhat cross. While thus standing and thus watchful, there comes thundering down the street a high-stepping-horse — bay, with white legs — it whirls on a cabriolet — blue, with vermilion wheels — two hands, in yellow kid gloves, are just seen under the hood. Mrs. Haughton suddenly blushes and draws in her head. Too late! the cabriolet has stopped — a gentleman leans forward, takes off his hat, bows respectfully. "Dear, dear!" murmurs Mrs. Haughton, "I do think he is going to call; some people are born to be tempted — my temptations have been immense! He is getting out — he knocks — I can't say, now, that I am not at home — very awkward! I wish Lionel were here! What does he mean — neglecting his own mother, and leaving her a prey to tempters?"

While the footman is responding to the smart knock of the visitor, we will explain how Mrs. Haughton had incurred that gentleman's acquaintance. In one of her walks to her new house while it was in the hands of the decorators, her mind being much absorbed in the consideration whether her drawing-roon curtains should be chintz or tabouret — just as she was crossing the street, she was all but run over by a gentleman's cabriolet. The horse was hard-mouthed, going at full speed. The driver pulled up just in time; but the wheel grazed her dress, and though she ran back instinctively, yet, when she was safe on the pavement, the fright overpowered her nerves,

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and she clung to the street-post almost fainting. Two or three passers-by humanely gathered round her; and the driver, looking back, and muttering to himself — "Not bad looking — neatly dressed — lady-like — French shawl — may have tin — worth while, perhaps!" gallantly descended and hastened to offer apologies, with a respectful hope that she was not injured.

Mrs. Haughton answered somewhat tartly, but being one of those good-hearted women who, apt to be rude, are extremely sorry for it the moment afterward, she wished to repair any hurt to his feelings occasioned by her first impulse; and, when, renewing his excuses, he offered his arm over the crossing, she did not like to refuse. On gaining the side of the way on which her house was situated, she had recovered sufficiently to blush for having accepted such familiar assistance from a perfect stranger, and somewhat to falter in returning thanks for his politeness.

Our gentleman, whose estimate of his attractions was not humble, ascribed the blushing cheek and faltering voice to the natural effect produced by his appearance; and he himself admiring very much a handsome bracelet on her wrist, which he deemed a favorable prognostic of "tin," he watched her to her door, and sent his groom in the course of the evening to make discreet inquiries in the neighborhood. The result of the inquiries induced him to resolve upon prosecuting the acquaintance thus begun. He contrived to learn the hours at which Mrs. Haughton usually visited the house, and to pass by Gloucester Place

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at the very nick of time. His bow was recognizing, respectful, interrogative — a bow that asked "how much farther?" But Mrs. Haughton's bow respondent seemed to declare "not at all!" The stranger did not adventure more that day; but a day or two afterward he came again into Gloucester Place on foot. On that occasion Mrs. Haughton was with her son, and the gentleman would not seem to perceive her. The next day he returned, she was then alone, and just as she gained her door he advanced — "I beg you ten thousand pardons, madam; but if I am rightly informed, I have the honor to address Mrs. Charles Haughton!"

The lady bowed in surprise.

"Ah, madam, your lamented husband was one of my most particular friends."

"You don't say so!" cried Mrs. Haughton, and looking more attentively at the stranger. There was in his dress and appearance something that she thought very stylish — a particular friend of Charles Haughton's was sure to be stylish—to be a man of the first water. And she loved the poor Captain's memory — her heart warmed to any "particular friend of his."

"Yes," resumed the gentleman, noting the advantage he had gained, "though I was considerably his junior, we were great cronies — excuse that familiar expression — in the Hussars together —"

"The Captain was not in the Hussars, Sir; he was in the Guards."

"Of course he was; but I was saying the Hussars, to-

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gether with the Guards, there were some very fine fellows — very fine — he was one of them. I could not resist paying my respects to the widowed lady of so fine a fellow. I know it is a liberty, ma'am, but 'tis my way. People who know me well—and I have a large acquaintance—are kind enough to excuse my way. And to think that villanous horse, which I had just bought out of Lord Bolton's stud—(200 guineas, ma'am, and cheap)—should have nearly taken the life of Charles Haughton's lovely relict. If any body else had been driving that brute, I shudder to think what might have been the consequences; but I have a wrist of iron. Strength is a vulgar qualification — very vulgar — but when it saves a lady from perishing, how can one be ashamed of it? But I am detaining you. Your own house, Mrs. Haughton?"

"Yes, Sir, I have just taken it, but the workmen have not finished. I am not yet settled here."

"Charming situation! My friend left a son, I believe? In the army already?"

"No, Sir; but he wishes it very much."

"Mr. Darrell, I think, could gratify that wish."

"What! you know Mr. Darrell, that most excellent, generous man? All we have we owe to him."

The gentleman abruptly turned aside—wisely—for his expression of face at that praise might have startled Mrs. Haughton.

"Yes, I knew him once. He has had many a fee out of my family. Goodish lawyer — cleverish man — and rich as a Jew. I should like to see my old friend's son,

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ma'am. He must be monstrous handsome with such parents!"

"Oh, Sir, very like his father. I shall be proud to present him to you."

"Ma'am, I thank you. I will have the honor to call—"

And thus is explained how Jasper Losely has knocked at Mrs. Haughton's door — has walked up her stairs — has seated himself in her drawing-room, and is now edging his chair, somewhat nearer to her, and throwing into his voice and looks a degree of admiration, which has been sincerely kindled by the aspect of her elegant apartments.

Jessica Haughton was not one of those women, if such there be, who do not know when a gentleman is making up to them. She knew perfectly well, that, with a very little encouragement, her visitor would declare himself a suitor. Nor, to speak truth, was she quite insensible to his handsome person, nor quite unmoved by his flatteries. She had her weak points, and vanity was one of them. Nor conceived she, poor lady, the slightest suspicion that Jasper Losely was not a personage whose attentions might flatter any woman. Though he had not even announced a name, but, pushing aside the footman, had sauntered in with as familiar an ease as if he had been a first cousin; though he had not uttered a syllable that could define his station, or attest his boasted friendship with the dear defunct, still Mrs. Haughton implicitly believed that she was with one of those gay Chiefs of *Ton* who had glittered round her Charlie in the earlier morn-

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ing of his life, ere he had sold out of the Guards, and brought himself out of jail; a lord, or an honorable at least, and was even (I shudder to say) revolving in her mind whether it might not be an excellent thing for her dear Lionel if she could prevail on herself to procure for him the prop and guidance of a distinguished and brilliant father-in-law — rich, noble, evidently good-natured, sensible, attractive. Oh! but the temptation was growing more and more IMMENSE! when suddenly the door opened, and in sprang Lionel, crying out, "Mother, dear, the Colonel has come with me on purpose to —"

He stopped short, staring hard at Jasper Losely. That gentleman advanced a few steps, extending his hand, but came to an abrupt halt on seeing Colonel Morley's figure now filling up the door-way. Not that he feared recognition — the Colonel did not know him by sight, but he knew by sight the Colonel. In his own younger day, when lolling over the rails of Rotten Row, he had enviously noted the leaders of fashion pass by, and Colonel Morley had not escaped his observation. Colonel Morley, indeed, was one of those men who by name and repute are sure to be known to all who, like Jasper Losely in his youth, would fain know something about that gaudy, babbling, and remorseless world which, like the sun, either vivifies or corrupts, according to the properties of the object on which it shines. Strange to say, it was the mere sight of the real fine gentleman that made the mock fine gentleman shrink and collapse. Though Jasper Losely knew himself to be still called a

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magnificent man — one of royal Nature's Life-guardsmen — though confident that from top to toe his habiliments could defy the criticism of the strictest martinet in polite costume, no sooner did that figure — by no means handsome, and clad in garments innocent of buckram, but guilty of wrinkles—appear on the threshold, than Jasper Losely felt small and shabby, as if he had been suddenly reduced to five feet two, and had bought his coat out of an old clothesman's bag.

Without appearing even to see Mr. Losely, the Colonel, in his turn, as he glided past him toward Mrs. Haughton, had, with what is proverbially called the corner of the eye, taken the whole of that impostor's superb *personnel* into calm survey, had read him through and through, and decided on these two points without the slightest hesitation — "a lady-killer and a sharper."

Quick as breathing had been the effect thus severally produced on Mrs. Haughton's visitors, which it has cost so many words to describe, so quick that the Colonel, without any apparent pause of dialogue, has already taken up the sentence Lionel left uncompleted, and says, as he bows over Mrs. Haughton's hand, "Come on purpose to claim acquaintance with an old friend's widow, a young friend's mother."

MRS. HAUGHTON. "I am sure, Colonel Morley, I am very much flattered. And you, too, knew the poor dear Captain; 'tis so pleasant to think that his old friends come round us now. This gentleman, also, was a particular friend of dear Charles's."

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The Colonel had somewhat small eyes, which moved with habitual slowness. He lifted those eyes, let them drop upon Jasper (who still stood in the middle of the room, with one hand still half-extended toward Lionel,) and letting the eyes rest there while he spoke, repeated,

"Particular friend of Charles Haughton's — the only one of his particular friends whom I never had the honor to see before."

Jasper who, whatever his deficiency in other virtues, certainly did not lack courage, made a strong effort at self-possession, and without replying to the Colonel, whose remark had not been directly addressed to himself, said, in his most rollicking tone — "Yes, Mrs. Haughton, Charles was my particular friend, but" — lifting his eye-glass — "but this gentleman was," dropping the eye-glass negligently, "not in our set, I suppose." Then advancing to Lionel, and seizing his hand, "I must introduce myself — the image of your father, I declare! I was saying to Mrs. Haughton how much I should like to see you — proposing to her, just as you came in, that we should go to the play together. Oh, ma'am, you may trust him to me safely. Young men should see LIFE." Here Jasper tipped Lionel one of those knowing winks with which he was accustomed to delight and insnare the young friends of Mr. Poole, and hurried on: "But in an innocent way, ma'am, such as mothers would approve. We'll fix an evening for it, when I have the honor to call again. Good-morning, Mrs. Haughton. Your hand again, Sir (to Lionel). — Ah, we shall be great friends, I

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guess! You must let me take you out in my cab — teach you to handle the ribbons, eh? 'Gad my old friend Charles *was* a whip. Ha! ha! Good-day, good-day!"

Not a muscle had moved in the Colonel's face during Mr. Losely's jovial monologue. But when Jasper had bowed himself out, Mrs. Haughton courtesying and ringing the bell for the footman to open the street-door, the man of the world (and, as man of the world, Colonel Morley was consummate) again raised those small, slow eyes — this time toward *her* face — and dropped the words —

"My old friend's particular friend is — not bad-looking, Mrs. Haughton!"

"And so lively and pleasant," returned Mrs. Haughton, with a slight rise of color, but no other sign of embarrassment. "It may be a nice acquaintance for Lionel."

"Mother!" cried that ungrateful boy, "you are not speaking seriously. I think the man is odious. If he were not my father's friend, I should say he was —"

"What, Lionel?" asked the Colonel, blandly — "was what?"

"Snobbish, Sir."

"Lionel, how dare you!" exclaimed Mrs. Haughton. "What vulgar words boys do pick up at school, Colonel Morely!"

"We must be careful that they do not pick up worse than words when they leave school, my dear madam. You will forgive me, but Mr. Darrell has so expressly —

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of course, with your permission — commended this young gentleman to my responsible care and guidance — so openly confided to me his views and intentions, that perhaps you would do me the very great favor not to force upon him, against his own wishes, the acquaintance of — that very good-looking person."

Mrs. Haughton pouted, but kept down her rising temper. The Colonel began to awe her.

"By-the-by," continued the man of the world, "may I inquire the name of my old friend's particular friend?"

"His name — upon my word I really don't know it. Perhaps he left his card — ring the bell, Lionel."

"You don't know his name, yet you know *him*, ma'am, and would allow your son to see LIFE under his auspices! I beg you ten thousand pardons; but even ladies the most cautious, mothers the most watchful, are exposed to — "

"Immense temptations — that is — to — to — "

"I understand perfectly, my dear Mrs. Haughton."

The footman appeared. "Did that gentleman leave a card?"

"No, ma'am."

"Did not you ask his name when he entered?"

"Yes, ma'am, but he said he would announce himself."

When the footman had withdrawn, Mrs. Haughton exclaimed, piteously, "I have been to blame, Colonel — I see it. But Lionel will tell you how I came to know the gentleman — the gentleman who nearly run over me, Lionel, and then spoke so kindly about your dear father."

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"Oh, that is the person! I supposed so," cried Lionel, kissing his mother, who was inclined to burst into tears. "I can explain it all now, Colonel Morley. Any one who says a kind word about my father warms my mother's heart to him at once. Is it not so, mother dear?"

"And long be it so," said Colonel Morley, with graceful earnestness; "and may such be my passport to your confidence, Mrs. Haughton. Charles was my old schoolfellow — a little boy when I and Darrell were in the sixth form; and pardon me if I add that if that gentleman were ever Charles Haughton's particular friend, he could scarcely have been a very wise one. For, unless his appearance greatly belie his years, he must have been little more than a boy when Charles Haughton left Lionel fatherless."

Here, in the delicacy of tact, seeing that Mrs. Haughton looked ashamed of the subject, and seemed aware of her imprudence, the Colonel rose, with a request—cheerfully granted — that Lionel might be allowed to come to breakfast with him the next morning.

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CHAPTER XI.

A man of the world, having accepted a troublesome charge, considers "what he will do with it;" and having promptly decided, is sure, first, that he could not have done better; and, secondly, that much may be said to prove that he could not have done worse.

RESERVING to a later occasion any more detailed description of Colonel Morley, it suffices for the present to say that he was a man of a very fine understanding, as applied to the special world in which he lived. Though no one had a more numerous circle of friends, and though with many of those friends he was on that footing of familiar intimacy which Darrell's active career once, and his rigid seclusion of late, could not have established with any idle denizen of that brilliant society in which Colonel Morley moved and had his being, yet to Alban Morley's heart (a heart not easily reached) no friend was so dear as Guy Darrell. They had entered Eton on the same day—left it the same day—lodged while there in the same house; and though of very different characters, formed one of those strong, imperishable, brotherly affections which the Fates weave into the very woof of existence.

Darrell's recommendation would have secured to any young *protégé* Colonel Morley's gracious welcome and invaluable advice. But both as Darrell's acknowledged kinsman and as Charles Haughton's son, Lionel called

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forth his kindliest sentiments, and obtained his most sagacious deliberations. He had already seen the boy several times before waiting on Mrs. Haughton, deeming it would please her to defer his visit until she could receive him in all the glories of Gloucester Place; and he had taken Lionel into high favor, and deemed him worthy of a conspicuous place in the world. Though Darrell, in his letter to Colonel Morley, had emphatically distinguished the position of Lionel, as a favored kinsman, from that of a presumptive or even a probable heir, yet the rich man had also added — "But I wish him to take rank as the representative to the Haughtons; and, whatever I may do with the bulk of my fortune, I shall insure to him a liberal independence. The completion of his education, the adequate allowance to him, the choice of a profession, are matters in which I entreat you to act for yourself, as if you were his guardian. I am leaving England—I may be abroad for years." Colonel Morley, in accepting the responsibilities thus pressed on him, brought to bear upon his charge subtle discrimination as well as conscientious anxiety.

He saw that Lionel's heart was set upon the military profession, and that his power of application seemed lukewarm and desultory when not cheered and concentred by enthusiasm, and would, therefore, fail him if directed to studies which had no immediate reference to the objects of his ambition. The Colonel accordingly dismissed the idea of sending him for three years to a University. Alban Morley summed up his theories

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on the collegiate ordeal in these succinct aphorisms: "Nothing so good as a University education, nor worse than a University without its education. Better throw a youth at once into the wider sphere of a capital, provided you there secure to his social life the ordinary checks of good company, the restraints imposed by the presence of decorous women, and men of grave years and dignified repute, than confine him to the exclusive society of youths of his own age—the age of wild spirits and unreflecting imitation—unless he cling to the safeguard which is found in hard reading, less by the book-knowledge it bestows than by the serious and preoccupied mind which it abstracts from the coarser temptations."

But Lionel, younger in character than in years, was too boyish as yet to be safely consigned to those trials of tact and temper which await the neophyte who enters on life through the doors of a mess-room. His pride was too morbid — too much on the alert for offence; his frankness too crude, his spirit too untamed by the insensible discipline of social commerce.

Quoth the observant Man of the World: "Place his honor in his own keeping, and he will carry it about with him on full cock, to blow off a friend's head or his own before the end of the first month. Huffy — decidedly huffy. And of all causes that disturb regiments, and induce court-martials, the commonest cause is a huffy lad! Pity! for that youngster has in him the right metal — spirit and talent that should make him a first-rate soldier. It would be time well spent, that should join professional

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studies with that degree of polite culture which gives dignity and cures *huffiness*. I must get him out of London, out of England — cut him off from his mother's apron-strings, and the particular friends of his poor father who prowl unannounced into the widow's drawing-room. He shall go to Paris — no better place to learn military theories, and be civilized out of huffy dispositions. No doubt my old friend, the chevalier, who has the art strategic at his finger-ends, might be induced to take him *en pension*, direct his studies, and keep him out of harm's way. I can secure to him the *entrée* into the circles of the rigid old Faubourg St. Germain, where manners are best bred, and household ties most respected. Besides, as I am so often at Paris myself, I shall have him under my eye; and a few years there spent in completing him as man may bring him nearer to that marshal's baton which every recruit should have in his eye, than if I started him at once, a raw boy, unable to take care of himself as an ensign, and unfitted, save by mechanical routine, to take care of others, should he live to buy the grade of a colonel."

The plans thus promptly formed Alban Morley briefly explained to Lionel, when the boy came to breakfast in Curzon Street, requesting him to obtain Mrs. Haughton's acquiescence in that exercise of the discretionary powers with which he had been invested by Mr. Darrell. To Lionel the proposition that commended the very studies to which his tastes directed his ambition, and placed his

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initiation into responsible manhood among scenes bright to his fancy, because new to his experience, seemed, of course, the perfection of wisdom.

Less readily pleased was poor Mrs. Haughton when her son returned to communicate the arrangement, backing a polite and well-worded letter from the Colonel with his own more artless eloquence. Instantly she flew off on the wing of her "little tempers." "What! her only son taken from her — sent to that horrid Continent, just when she was so respectably settled! What was the good of money if she was to be parted from her boy? Mr. Darrell might take the money back if he pleased — she would write and tell him so. Colonel Morley had no feeling; and she was shocked to think Lionel was in such unnatural hands. She saw very plainly that he no longer cared for her—a serpent's tooth, etc., etc." But as soon as the burst was over the sky cleared, and Mrs. Haughton became penitent and sensible. Then her grief for Lionel's loss was diverted by preparations for his departure. There was his wardrobe to see to—a patent portmanteau to purchase and to fill. And, all done, the last evening mother and son spent together, though painful at the moment, it would be happiness for both hereafter to recall! Their hands clasped in each other—her head leaning on his young shoulder—her tears kissed so soothingly away. And soft words of kindly, motherly counsel —sweet promises of filial performance. Happy, thrice happy, as an after remembrance, be the final parting be-

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tween hopeful son and fearful parent, at the foot of that mystic bridge which starts from the threshold of Home —lost in the dimness of the far-opposing shore !—bridge over which goes the boy who will never return but as the man.

CHAPTER XII.

The Pocket-Cannibal baits his woman's trap with love-letters.—And a widow allured steals timidly toward it from under the weeds.

JASPER LOSELY is beginning to be hard up ! The infallible calculation at *rouge-et-noir* has carried off all that capital which had accumulated from the savings of the young gentlemen whom Dolly Poole had contributed to his exchequer. Poole himself is beset by duns, and pathetically observes "that he has lost three stone in weight, and that he believes the calves to his legs are gone to enlarge his liver."

Jasper is compelled to put down his cabriolet — to discharge his groom—to retire from his fashionable lodgings; and just when the prospect even of a dinner becomes dim, he bethinks himself of Arabella Crane, and remembers that she promised him £5, nay, £10, which are still due from her. He calls — he is received like the prodigal son. Nay, to his own surprise, he finds Mrs. Crane has made her house much more inviting — the drawing-rooms are cleaned up; the addition of a few easy articles of furniture gives them quite a comfortable air. She herself has

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improved in costume — though her favorite color still remains iron-gray. She informs Jasper that she fully expected him—that these preparations are in his honor—that she has engaged a very good cook — that she hopes he will dine with her when not better engaged; in short, let him feel himself at home in Poddon Place.

Jasper at first suspected a sinister design, under civilities that his conscience told him were unmerited — a design to entrap him into that matrimonial alliance which he had so ungallantly scouted, and from which he still recoiled with an abhorrence which man is not justified in feeling for any connubial partner less preternaturally terrific than the Witch of Endor or the Bleeding Nun!

But Mrs. Crane quickly and candidly hastened to dispel his ungenerous apprehensions. "She had given up," she said, "all ideas so preposterous — love and wedlock were equally out of her mind. But ill as he had behaved to her, she could not but feel a sincere regard for him — a deep interest in his fate. He ought still to make a brilliant marriage — did that idea not occur to him? She might help him there with her woman's wit. In short," said Mrs. Crane, pinching her lips, "in short, Jasper, I feel for you as a *mother*. Look on me as such!"

That pure and affectionate notion wonderfully tickled, and egregiously delighted Jasper Losely. "Look on you as a mother! I will," said he, with emphasis. "Best of creatures!" And though in his own mind he had not a doubt that she still adored him (not as a mother), he believed it was a disinterested, devoted adoration, such

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as the beautiful brute really had inspired more than once in his abominable life. Accordingly, he moved into the neighborhood of Poddon Place, contenting himself with a second-floor bedroom, in a house recommended to him by Mrs. Crane, and taking his meals at his adopted mother's with filial familiarity. She expressed a desire to make Mr. Poole's acquaintance — Jasper hastened to present that worthy. Mrs. Crane invited Samuel Dolly to dine one day, to sup the next; she lent him £3 to redeem his dress-coat from pawn, and she gave him medicaments for the relief of his headache.

Samuel Dolly venerated her as a most superior woman —envied Jasper such a "mother." Thus easily did Arabella Crane possess herself of the existence of Jasper Losely. Lightly her fingers closed over it — lightly as the fisherman's over the captivated trout. And whatever her generosity, it was not carried to imprudence. She just gave to Jasper enough to bring him within her power — she had no idea of ruining herself by larger supplies — she concealed from him the extent of her income (which was in chief part derived from house rents), the amount of her savings, even the name of her banker. And if he carried off to the *rouge-et-noir* table the coins he obtained from her, and came for more, Mrs. Crane put on the look of a mother incensed — mild but awful — and scolded as mothers sometimes can scold. Jasper Losely began to be frightened at Mrs. Crane's scoldings. And he had not that power over her, which, though arrogated by a lover, is denied to an adopted son. His mind, re-

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lieved from the habitual distraction of the gaming-table — for which the resource was wanting — settled with redoubled ardor on the image of Mrs. Haughton. He had called at her house several times since the fatal day on which he had met there Colonel Morley, but Mrs. Haughton was never at home. And as, when the answer was given to him by the footman, he had more than once, on crossing the street, seen herself through the window, it was clear that his acquaintance was not courted. Jasper Losely, by habit, was the reverse of a pertinacious and troublesome suitor — not, Heaven knows, from want of audacity, but from excess of self-love. Where a Lovelace so superb condescended to make overtures, a Clarissa so tasteless as to decline them deserved and experienced his contempt. Besides, steadfast and prolonged pursuit of any object, however important and attractive, was alien to the levity and fickleness of his temper. But in this instance he had other motives than those on the surface for unusual perseverance.

A man like Jasper Losely never reposes implicit confidence in any one. He is garrulous, indiscreet — lets out much that Machiavel would have advised him not to disclose; but he invariably has nooks and corners in his mind which he keeps to himself. Jasper did not confide to his adopted mother his designs upon his intended bride. But she knew them through Poole, to whom he was more frank; and when she saw him looking over her select and severe library—taking therefrom the *Polite Letter-Writer* and the *Elegant Extracts*, Mrs. Crane divined at once

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that Jasper Losely was meditating the effect of epistolary seduction upon the Widow of Gloucester Place.

Jasper did not write a bad love-letter in the florid style. He had at his command, in especial, certain poetical quotations, the effect of which repeated experience had assured him to be as potent upon the female breast as the incantations or *Carmina* of the ancient sorcery. The following in particular:

> "Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
> I ne'er could injure you."

Another — generally to be applied when confessing that his career had been interestingly wild, and would, if pity were denied him, be pathetically short:

> "When he who adores thee has left but the name
> Of his faults and his follies behind."

Armed with these quotations — many a sentence from the *Polite Letter-Writer* or the *Elegant Extracts* — and a quire of rose-edged paper, Losely sat down to Ovidian composition. But as he approached the close of Epistle the First, it occurred to him that a signature and address were necessary. The address not difficult. He could give Poole's (hence his confidence to that gentleman) — Poole had a lodging in Bury Street, St. James, a fashionable locality for single men. But the name required more consideration. There were insuperable objections against signing his own to any person who might be in communication with Mr. Darrell — a pity, for there was a good old family of the name of Losely. A name of aristocratic sound might indeed be readily borrowed from

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any lordly proprietor thereof without asking a formal consent. But this loan was exposed to danger. Mrs. Haughton might very naturally mention such name, as borne by her husband's friend, to Colonel Morley, and Colonel Morley would most probably know enough of the connections and relations of any peer so honored to say, "There is no such Greville, Cavendish, or Talbot." But Jasper Losely was not without fertility of invention and readiness of resource. A grand idea, worthy of a master, and proving that, if the man had not been a rogue in grain, he could have been reared into a very clever politician, flashed across him. He would sign himself "SMITH." Nobody could say there is no such SMITH; nobody could say that a Smith might not be a most respectable, fashionable, highly-connected man. There are Smiths who are millionaires — Smiths who are large-acred squires — substantial baronets — peers of England, and pillars of the State — members even of the British Cabinet. You can no more question a man's right to be a Smith than his right to be a Briton; and wide as the diversity of rank, lineage, virtue, and genius in Britons, is the diversity in Smiths. But still a name so generic often affects a definite precursor. Jasper signed himself "J. COURTENAY SMITH."

He called, and left Epistle the First with his own kid-gloved hand, inquiring first if Mrs. Haughton were at home, and, responded to in the negative, this time, he asked for her son. "Her son was gone abroad with Colonel Morley." Jasper, though sorry to lose present hold over the boy, was consoled at learning that the

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colonel was off the ground. More sanguine of success, he glanced up at the window, and, sure that Mrs. Haughton was there, though he saw her not, lifted his hat with as melancholy an expression of reproach as he could throw into his face.

The villain could not have found a moment in Mrs. Haughton's widowed life so propitious to his chance of success. In her lodging-house at Pimlico, the good lady had been too incessantly occupied for that idle train of reverie in which, the poets assure us, that Cupid finds leisure to whet his arrows, and take his aim. Had Lionel still been by her side — had even Colonel Morley been in town — her affection for the one, her awe of the other, would have been her safeguards. But alone in that fine new house — no friends, no acquaintances as yet — no dear visiting circle on which to expend the desire of talk and the zest for innocent excitement that are natural to ladies of an active mind and a nervous temperament, the sudden obtrusion of a suitor so respectfully ardent — oh, it is not to be denied that the temptation was IMMENSE!

And when that note, so neatly folded — so elegantly sealed — lay in her irresolute hand, the widow could not but feel that she was still young, still pretty; and her heart flew back to the day when the linen-draper's fair daughter had been the cynosure of the provincial High Street — when young officers had lounged to and fro the pavement, looking in at her window — when ogles and notes had alike beset her, and the dark eyes of the irresistible Charlie Haughton had first taught her pulse to

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tremble. And in her hand lies the letter of Charlie Haughton's particular friend. She breaks the seal. She reads — a declaration!

Five letters in five days did Jasper write. In the course of those letters, he explains away the causes for suspicion which Colonel Morley had so ungenerously suggested. He is no longer anonymous — he is J. Courtenay Smith. He alludes incidentally to the precocious age in which he had become "lord of himself, that heritage of woe." This accounts for his friendship with a man so much his senior as the late Charlie. He confesses that, in the vortex of dissipation, his hereditary estates have disappeared; but he has still a genteel independence; and with the woman of his heart, etc., etc. He had never before known what real love was, etc. "Pleasure had fired his maddening soul;" "but the heart — the heart been lonely still." He entreated only a personal interview, even though to be rejected — scorned. Still, when "he who adored her had left but the name," etc., etc. Alas! alas! as Mrs. Haughton put down Epistle the Fifth, she hesitated; and the woman who hesitates in such a case, is sure, at least — to write a civil answer.

Mrs. Haughton wrote but three lines — still they *were* civil — and conceded an interview for the next day, though implying that it was but for the purpose of assuring Mr. J. Courtenay Smith in person, of her unalterable fidelity to the shade of his lamented friend.

In high glee Jasper showed Mrs. Haughton's answer to Dolly Poole, and began seriously to speculate on the

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probable amount of the widow's income, and the value of her movables in Gloucester Place. Thence he repaired to Mrs. Crane; and, emboldened by the hope forever to escape from maternal tutelage, braved her scoldings, and asked for a couple of sovereigns. He was sure that he should be in luck that night. She gave to him the sum and spared the scoldings. But as soon as he was gone, conjecturing, from the bravado of his manner, what had really occurred, Mrs. Crane put on her bonnet and went out.

CHAPTER XIII.

Unhappy is the man who puts his trust in — a woman.

LATE that evening a lady, in a black vail, knocked at No. — Gloucester Place, and asked to see Mrs. Haughton on urgent business. She was admitted. She remained but five minutes.

The next day, when "gay as a bridegroom prancing to his bride," Jasper Losely presented himself at the widow's door, the servant placed in his hand a packet, and informed him bluffly that Mrs. Haughton had gone out of town. Jasper with difficulty suppressed his rage, opened the packet — his own letters returned, with these words — "Sir, your name is not Courtenay Smith. If you trouble me again I shall apply to the police." Never from female hand had Jasper Losely's pride received such

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a slap on its face. He was literally stunned. Mechanically he hastened to Arabella Crane; and having no longer any object in concealment, but, on the contrary, a most urgent craving for sympathy, he poured forth his indignation and wrongs. No mother could be more consolatory than Mrs. Crane. She soothed, she flattered, she gave him an excellent dinner; after which she made him so comfortable — what with an easy-chair and complimentary converse, that, when Jasper rose late to return to his lodging, he said: "After all, if I had been ugly and stupid, and of a weakly constitution, I should have been of a very domestic turn of mind."

CHAPTER XIV.

No Author ever drew a character, consistent to human nature, but what he was forced to ascribe to it many inconsistencies.

WHETHER moved by that pathetic speech of Jasper's, or by some other impule not less feminine, Arabella Crane seemed suddenly to conceive the laudable and arduous design of reforming that portentous sinner. She had some distant relations in London, whom she very rarely troubled with a visit, and who, had she wanted any thing from them, would have shut their doors in her face; but as, on the contrary, she was well off, single, and might leave her money to whom she pleased, the distant relations were always warm in manner, and prodigal in their

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offers of service. The next day she repaired to one of these kinsfolk — a person in a large way of business — and returned home with two great books in white sheepskin. And when Losely looked in to dine, she said, in the suavest tones a tender mother can address to an amiable truant, "Jasper, you have great abilities — at the gaming-table abilities are evidently useless — your forte is calculation — you were always very quick at that. I have been fortunate enough to procure you an easy piece of taskwork, for which you will be liberally remunerated. A friend of mine wishes to submit these books to a regular accountant; he suspects that a clerk has cheated him, but he cannot tell how or where. You know accounts thoroughly — no one better — and the pay will be ten-guineas."

Jasper, though his early life had rendered familiar and facile to him the science of book-keeping and double-entry, made a grimace at the revolting idea of any honest labor, however light and well paid. But ten guineas were an immense temptation, and in the evening Mrs. Crane coaxed him into the task.

Neglecting no feminine art to make the lawless nomad feel at home under her roof, she had provided for his ease and comfort morocco slippers and a superb dressing-robe, in material rich, in color becoming. Men, single or marital, are accustomed to connect the idea of home with dressing-gown and slippers, especially if, after dinner, they apply (as Jasper Losely now applied) to occupations, in which the brain is active, the form in repose.

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What achievement, literary or scientific, was ever accomplished by a student strapped to unyielding boots, and "cabined, cribbed, confined," in a coat that fits him like wax? As robed in the cozy garment which is consecrated to the sacred familiar Lares, the relaxing, handsome ruffian sate in the quiet room, bending his still regular profile over the sheepskin books — the harmless pen in that strong well-shaped hand, Mrs. Crane watched him with a softening countenance. To bear him company, she had actively taken herself to work — the gold thimble dragged from its long repose — marking and hemming, with nimble artistic fingers, new cravats for the adopted son! Strange creature is Woman! Ungrateful and perfidious as that sleek tiger before her had often proved himself — though no man could less deserve one kindly sentiment in a female heart — though she knew that he cared nothing for her, still it was pleasing to know that he cared for nobody else — that he was sitting in the same room — and Arabella Crane felt that if that existence could continue she could forget the past, and look contented toward the future. Again I say, strange creature is Woman!—and, in this instance, creature more strange, because so grim! But as her eyes soften, and her fingers work, and her mind revolves schemes for making that lawless wild beast an innocuous, tame animal, who can help feeling for and with grim Arabella Crane?

Poor woman! And will not the experiment succeed? Three evenings does Jasper Losely devote to this sinless life and its peaceful occupation. He completes his task

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—he receives the ten guineas. (How much of that fee came out of Mrs. Crane's privy purse?) He detects three mistakes, which justify suspicion of the book-keeper's integrity. Set a thief to catch a thief! He is praised for acuteness, and promised a still lighter employment, to be still better paid. He departs, declaring that he will come the next day, earlier than usual—he volunteers an eulogium upon work in general—he vows that evenings so happy he has not spent for years—he leaves Mrs. Crane so much impressed by the hope of his improvement, that if a good clergyman had found her just at that moment, she might almost have been induced to pray. But—

"Heu quoties fidem
Mutatosque deos flebit!"

Jasper Losely returns not, neither to Poddon Place nor to his lodging in the neighborhood. Days elapse; still he comes not; even Poole does not know where he has gone; even Poole has not seen him! But that latter worthy is now laid up with a serious rheumatic fever—confined to his room and water-gruel. And Jasper Losely is not the man to intrude himself on the privacy of a sick chamber. Mrs. Crane, more benevolent, visits Poole—cheers him up—gets him a nurse—writes to Uncle Sam. Poole blesses her. He hopes that Uncle Sam, moved by the spectacle of his sick bed, will say, "Don't let your debts fret you—I will pay them!" Whatever her disappointment or resentment at Jasper's thankless and mysterious evasion, Arabella Crane is

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calmly confident of his return. To her servant, Bridgett Greggs, who was perhaps the sole person in the world who entertained affection for the lone, gaunt woman, and who held Jasper Losely in profound detestation, she said, with tranquil sternness, "That man has crossed my life, and darkened it. He passed away, and left Night behind him. He has dared to return. He shall never escape me again till the grave yawn for one of us."

"But, Lor' love you, miss, you would not put yourself in the power of such a black-hearted villing?"

"In *his* power! No, Bridgett; fear not, he must be in mine — sooner or later in mine — hand and foot. Patience!"

As she was thus speaking — a knock at the door — "It is he — I told you so — quick!"

But it was not Jasper Losely. It was Mr. Rugge.

CHAPTER XV.

"When God wills, all winds bring rain." — *Ancient Proverb.*

THE manager had not submitted to the loss of his property in Sophy and £100, without taking much vain trouble to recover the one or the other. He had visited Jasper while that gentleman lodged in St. James's, but the moment he hinted at the return of the £100, Mr. Losely opened both door and window, and requested the manager to make his immediate choice of the two.

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Taking the more usual mode of exit, Mr. Rugge vented his just indignation in a lawyer's letter, threatening Mr. Losely with an action for conspiracy and fraud. He had also more than once visited Mrs. Crane, who somewhat soothed him by allowing that he had been very badly used, that he ought at least to be repaid his money, and promising to do her best to persuade Mr. Losely to "behave like a gentleman." With regard to Sophy herself, Mrs. Crane appeared to feel a profound indifferance. In fact, the hatred which Mrs. Crane had unquestionably conceived for Sophy while under her charge, was much diminished by Losely's unnatural conduct toward the child. To her it was probably a matter of no interest whether Sophy was in Rugge's hands or Waife's; enough for her that the daughter of a woman against whose memory her fiercest passions were enlisted was, in either case, so far below herself in the grades of the social ladder.

Perhaps of the two protectors for Sophy — Rugge and Waife — her spite alone would have given the preference to Waife. He was on a still lower step of the ladder than the itinerant manager. Nor, though she had so mortally injured the forlorn cripple in the eyes of Mr. Hartopp, had she any deliberate purpose of revenge to gratify against *him!* On the contrary, if she viewed him with contempt, it was a contempt not unmixed with pity. It was necessary to make to the mayor the communications she had made, or that worthy magistrate would not have surrendered the child intrusted to him, at least until

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Waife's return. And really it was a kindness to the old man to save him both from an agonizing scene with Jasper, and from the more public opprobrium which any resistance on his part to Jasper's authority, or any altercation between the two, would occasion. And as her main object then was to secure Losely's allegiance to her, by proving her power to be useful to him, so Waifes, and Sophys, and Mayors, and Managers, were to her but as pawns to be moved and sacrificed, according to the leading strategy of her game.

Rugge came now, agitated and breathless, to inform Mrs. Crane that Waife had been seen in London. Mr. Rugge's clown had seen him, not far from the Tower; but the cripple had disappeared before the clown, who was on the top of an omnibus, had time to descend. "And even if he had actually caught hold of Mr. Waife," observed Mrs. Crane, "what then? You have no claim on Mr. Waife."

"But the Phenomenon must be with that ravishing marauder," said Rugge. "However, I have set a minister of justice, that is, ma'am, a detective police, at work; and what I now ask of you is simply this—should it be necessary for Mr. Losely to appear with me before the senate, that is to say, ma'am, a metropolitan police court, in order to prove my legal property in my own bought and paid-for Phenomenon, will you induce that bold, bad man, not again to return the poisoned chalice to my lips?"

"I do not even know where Mr. Losely is—perhaps not in London."

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"Ma'am, I saw him last night at the theater — Princess'. I was in the shilling gallery. He who owes me £100, ma'am — he in a private box!"

"Ah! you are sure; by himself?"

"With a lady, ma'am — a lady in a shawl from Ingee. I know them shawls. My father taught me to know them in early childhood, for he was an ornament to British commerce—a broker, ma'am — pawn! And," continued, Rugge, with a withering smile, "that man in a private box, which at the Princess' costs two pounds two, and with the spoils of Ingee by his side, lifted his eye-glass and beheld me; me in the shilling gallery, and his conscience did not say 'should we not change places if I paid that gentleman £100?' Can such things be, and overcome us, ma'am, like a summer-cloud, without our special — I put it to you, ma'am — wonder?"

"Oh, with a lady, was he!" exclaimed Arabella Crane; her wrath, which, while the manager spoke, gathered fast and full, bursting now into words — "His ladies shall know the man who sells his own child for a show; only find out where the girl is, then come here again before you stir further. Oh, with a lady! Go to your detective policeman, or, rather, send him to me; we will first discover Mr. Losely's address. I will pay all the expenses. Rely on my zeal, Mr. Rugge."

Much comforted, the manager went his way. He had not been long gone before Jasper himself appeared. The traitor entered with a more than customary bravado of manner, as if he apprehended a scolding, and was pre-

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pared to face it; but Mrs. Crane neither reproached him for his prolonged absence, nor expressed surprise at his return. With true feminine duplicity she received him as if nothing had happened. Jasper, thus relieved, became of his own accord apologetic and explanatory; evidently he wanted something of Mrs. Crane. "The fact is, my dear friend," said he, sinking into a chair, "that the day after I last saw you, I happened to go to the General Post-office to see if there were any letters for me — you smile, you don't believe me. Honor bright — here they are," and Jasper took from the side-pocket of his coat a pocket-book — a new pocket-book — a brilliant pocket-book — fragrant Russian leather — delicately embossed — golden clasps — silken linings — jeweled pencil-case — malachite penknife — an arsenal of nicknacks stored in neat recesses; such a pocket-book as no man ever gives to himself. Sardanapalus would not have given that pocket-book to himself! Such a pocket-book never comes to you, oh, enviable Lotharios, save as tributary keep-sakes from the charmers who adore you! Grimly the Adopted Mother eyed that pocket-book. Never had she seen it before. Grimly she pinched her lips. Out of this dainty volume — which would have been of cumbrous size to a slim thread-paper exquisite, but scarcely bulged into ripple the Atlantic expanse of Jasper Losely's magnificent chest — the monster drew forth two letters on French paper — foreign post-marks. He replaced them quickly, only suffering her eye to glance at the address, and continued: "Fancy! that purse-proud Grand Turk

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of an infidel, though he would not believe me, has been to France — yes, actually to * * * * * — making inquiries evidently with reference to Sophy. The woman who ought to have thoroughly converted him took flight, however, and missed seeing him. Confound her! I ought to have been there. So I have no doubt for the present the Pagan remains stubborn. Gone on into Italy, I hear; doing me, violating the laws of nature, and roving about the world with his own solitary hands in his bottomless pockets, like the Wandering Jew! But, as some slight set-off in my run of ill-luck, I find at the Post-office a pleasanter letter than the one which brings me this news: A rich elderly lady, who has no family, wants to adopt a nice child, will take Sophy; make it worth my while to let her have Sophy. 'Tis convenient in a thousand ways to settle one's child comfortably in a rich house — establishes rights, subject, of course, to *cheques* which would not affront *me* — a Father! But the first thing requisite is to catch Sophy; 'tis in that I ask your help — you are so clever. Best of creatures! what could I do without you? As you say, whenever I want a friend I come to you — Bella!"

Mrs. Crane surveyed Jasper's face deliberately. It is strange how much more readily women read the thoughts of men than men detect those of women. "You know where the child is," said she, slowly.

"Well, I take it for granted she is with the old man; and I have seen him — seen him yesterday."

"Go on; you saw him — where?"

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"Near London Bridge."

What business could you possibly have in that direction? Ah! I guess, the railway-station — to Dover — you are going abroad?"

"No such thing — you are so horridly suspicious. But it is true I had been to the station inquiring after some luggage or parcels which a friend of mine had ordered to be left there — now, don't interrupt me. At the foot of the bridge I caught a sudden glimpse of the old man — changed — altered — aged — one eye lost. You had said I should not know him again, but I did; I should never have recognized his face. I knew him by the build of the shoulder, a certain turn of the arms — I don't know what; one knows a man familiar to one from birth without seeing his face. Oh, Bella! I declare that I felt as soft — as soft as the silliest muff who ever —" Jasper did not complete his comparison, but paused a moment, breathing hard, and then broke into another sentence. "He was selling something in a basket — matches, bootstraps, deuce knows what. He! a clever man, too! I should have liked to drop into that d——d basket all the money I had about me."

"Why did not you?"

"Why? How could I? He would have recognized me. There would have been a scene — a row — a flare up — a mob round us, I dare say. I had no idea it would so upset me; to see him selling matches, too; glad we did not meet at Gatesboro'. Not even for that £100 do I think I could have faced him. No — as he said when

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we last parted: 'The world is wide enough for both.' Give me some brandy — thank you."

"You did not speak to the old man — he did not see you — but you wanted to get back the child; you felt sure she must be with him; you followed him home?"

"I? No; I should have had to wait for hours. A man like me, loitering about London Bridge! — I should have been too conspicuous — he would have soon caught sight of me, though I kept on his blind side. I employed a ragged boy to watch and follow him, and here is the address. Now, will you get Sophy back for me without any trouble to me, without my appearing? I would rather charge a regiment of Horse Guards than bully that old man."

"Yet you would rob him of that child — his sole comfort?"

"Bother!" cried Losely, impatiently: "the child can be only a burden to him; well out of his way; 'tis for the sake of that child he is selling matches! It would be the greatest charity we could do him to set him free from that child sponging on him, dragging him down; without her he'd find a way to shift for himself. Why, he's even cleverer than I am! And there — and there — give him this money, but don't say it came from me."

He thrust, without counting, several sovereigns — at least twelve or fourteen — into Mrs. Crane's palm; and so powerful a charm has goodness the very least, even in natures the most evil, that that unusual, eccentric, inconsistent gleam of human pity in Jasper Losely's benighted

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soul, shed its relenting influence over the angry, wrathful, and vindictive feelings with which Mrs. Crane the moment before regarded the perfidious miscreant; and she gazed at him with a sort of melancholy wonder. What! though so little sympathizing with affection that he could not comprehend that he was about to rob the old man of a comfort which no gold could repay — what! though so contemptuously callous to his own child — yet there in her hand lay the unmistakable token that a something of humanity, compunction, compassion, still lingered in the breast of the greedy cynic; and at that thought all that was softest in her own human nature moved toward him — indulgent — gentle. But in the rapid changes of the heart-feminine, the very sentiment that touched upon love brought back the jealousy that bordered upon hate. How came he by so much money? more than days ago, he, the insatiate spendthrift, had received for his taskwork? And that POCKET-BOOK!

"You have suddenly grown rich, Jasper?"

For a moment he looked confused, but replied, as he re-helped himself to the brandy, "Yes, *rougé-et-noir* — luck. Now do go and see after this affair, that's a dear, good woman. Get the child to-day, if you can. I will call here in the evening."

"Should you take her, then, abroad at once to this worthy lady who will adopt her? If so, we shall meet, I suppose, no more; and I am assisting you to forget that I live still."

"Abroad — that crotchet of yours again. You are

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quite mistaken — in fact, the lady is in London. It was for her effects that I went to the station. Oh, don't be jealous — quite elderly."

"Jealous, my dear Jasper; you forget. I am as your mother. One of your letters, then, announced this lady's intended arrival. You were in correspondence with this — elderly lady?"

"Why, not exactly in correspondence. But when I left Paris I gave the General Post-office as my address to a few friends in France. And this lady, who took an interest in my affairs (ladies, whether old or young, who have once known me always do), was aware that I had expectations with respect to the child. So, some days ago, when I was so badly off, I wrote a line to tell her that Sophy had been no go, and that but for a dear friend (that is you) I might be on the *pavé*. In her answer, she said she should be in London as soon as I received her letter; and gave me an address here at which to learn where to find her when arrived — a good old soul, but strange to London. I have been very busy, helping her to find a house, recommending tradesmen, and so forth. She likes style, and can afford it. A pleasant house enough; but our quiet evenings here spoil me for any thing else. Now get on your bonnet, and let me see you off."

"On one condition, my dear Jasper; that you stay here till I return."

Jasper made a wry face. But, as it was near dinner time, and he never wanted for appetite, he at length

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agreed to employ the interval of her absence in discussing a meal, which experience had told him Mrs. Crane's new cook would, not unskillfully, though hastily, prepare. Mrs. Crane left him to order the dinner, and put on her shawl and bonnet. But, gaining her own room, she rung for Bridgett Greggs; and when that confidential servant appeared, she said: "In the side-pocket of Mr. Losely's coat there is a POCKET-BOOK; in it there are some letters which I must see. I shall appear to go out, leave the street-door ajar, that I may slip in again unobserved. You will serve dinner as soon as possible. And when Mr. Losely, as usual, exchanges his coat for the dressing-gown, contrive to take out that pocket-book unobserved by him. Bring it to me here, in this room: you can as easily replace it afterward. A moment will suffice to my purpose."

Bridgett nodded, and understood. Jasper, standing by the window, saw Mrs. Crane leave the house, walking briskly. He then threw himself on the sofa, and began to doze: the doze deepened, and became sleep. Bridgett, entering to lay the cloth, so found him. She approached on tiptoe — sniffed the perfume of the pocket-book — saw its gilded corners peep forth from its lair. She hesitated — she trembled — she was in mortal fear of that truculent slumberer; but sleep lessens the awe thieves feel, or heroes inspire. She has taken the pocket-book—she has fled with the booty — she is in Mrs. Crane's apartment, not five minutes after Mrs. Crane has regained its threshold.

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Rapidly the jealous woman ransacked the pocket-book — started to see, elegantly worked with gold threads, in the lining, the words, "SOUVIENS-TOI DE TA GABRIELLE" — no other letters, save the two, of which Jasper had vouchsafed to her but the glimpse. Over these she hurried her glittering eyes; and when she restored them to their place, and gave back the book to Bridgett, who stood by, breathless and listening, lest Jasper should awake, her face was colorless, and a kind of shudder seemed to come over her. Left alone, she rested her face on her hand, her lips moving as if in self-commune. Then noiselessly she glided down the stairs, regained the street, and hurried fast upon her way.

Bridgett was not in time to restore the book to Jasper's pocket, for when she re-entered he was turning round and stretching himself between sleep and waking. But she dropped the book skillfully on the floor, close beside the sofa; it would seem to him, on waking, to have fallen out of the pocket in the natural movements of sleep.

And in fact, when he rose, dinner now on the table, he picked up the pocket-book without suspicion. But it was lucky that Bridgett had not waited for the opportunity suggested by her mistress. For when Jasper put on the dressing-gown, he observed that his coat wanted brushing; and, in giving it to the servant for that purpose, he used the precaution of taking out the pocket-book, and placing it in some other receptacle of his dress.

Mrs. Crane returned in less than two hours — returned

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with a disappointed look, which at once prepared Jasper for the intelligence that the birds to be entrapped had flown.

"They went away this afternoon," said Mrs. Crane, tossing Jasper's sovereigns on the table, as if they burned her fingers. "But leave the fugitives to me. I will find them."

Jasper relieved his angry mind by a series of guilty but meaningless expletives; and then, seeing no farther use to which Mrs. Crane's wits could be applied at present, finished the remainder of her brandy, and wished her good-night, with a promise to call again, but without any intimation of his own address. As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Crane once more summoned Bridgett.

"You told me last week that your brother-in-law, Simpson, wished to go to America, that he had the offer of employment there, but that he could not afford the fare of the voyage. I promised I would help him if it was a service to you."

"You are a hangel, Miss!" exclaimed Bridgett, dropping a low courtesy — so low that it seemed as if she was going on her knees. "And may you have your deserts in the next blessed world, where there are no black-hearted villings."

"Enough, enough," said Mrs. Crane, recoiling, perhaps, from that grateful benediction. "You have been faithful to me, as none else have ever been; but this time I do not serve you in return so much as I meant to do. The service is reciprocal, if your brother-in-law will do me a

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favor. He takes with him his daughter, a mere child. Bridgett, let them enter their names on the steam-vessel as William and Sophy Waife; they can, of course, resume their own name when the voyage is over. There is the fare for them, and something more. Pooh, no thanks. I can spare the money. See your brother-in-law the first thing in the morning; and remember they go by the next vessel, which sails from Liverpool on Thursday."

CHAPTER XVI.

Those poor Pocket Cannibals, how society does persecute them! Even a menial servant would give warning if disturbed at his meals. But your Man-eater is the meekest of creatures; he will never give warning, and — not often take it.

WHATEVER the source that had supplied Jasper Losely with the money, from which he had so generously extracted the sovereigns intended to console Waife for the loss of Sophy, that source either dried up, or became wholly inadequate to his wants. For elasticity was the felicitous peculiarity of Mr. Losely's wants. They accommodated themselves to the state of his finances with mathematical precision, always requiring exactly five times the amount of the means placed at his disposal. From a shilling to a million, multiply his wants by five times the total of his means, and you arrived at a just conclusion. Jasper called upon Poole, who was slowly recovering, but unable to leave his room; and finding that gentleman in a more

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melancholy state of mind than usual, occasioned by Uncle Sam's brutal declaration, that "if responsible for his godson's sins, he was not responsible for his debts;" and that he really thought "the best thing Samuel Dolly could do was to go to prison for a short time, and get whitewashed;" Jasper began to lament his own hard fate: "And just when one of the finest women in Paris has come here on purpose to see me," said the lady-killer; "a lady who keeps her carriage, Dolly! Would have introduced you if you had been well enough to go out. One can't be always borrowing of her. I wish one could. There's Mother Crane would sell her gown off her back for me, but, 'Gad, Sir, she snubs, and positively frightens me. Besides, she lays traps to demean me — set me to work like a clerk (not that I would hurt your feelings, Dolly. If you are a clerk, or something of that sort, you are a gentleman at heart). Well, then, we are both done up and cleaned out; and my decided opinion is, that nothing is left but a bold stroke."

"I have no objection to bold strokes, but I don't see any; and Uncle Sam's bold stroke of the Fleet Prison is not at all to my taste."

"Fleet Prison! Fleet fiddlestick! No. You have never been in Russia? Why should we not go there both? My Paris friend, Madame Caumartin, was going to Italy, but her plans are changed, and she is now all for St. Petersburg. She will wait a few days for you to get well. We will all go together and enjoy ourselves. The Russians doat upon whist. We shall get into their swell

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sets, and live like princes." Therewith Jasper launched forth on the text of Russian existence, in such glowing terms, that Dolly Poole shut his aching eyes, and fancied himself sledging down the Neva, covered with furs — a countess waiting for him at dinner, and counts in dozens ready to offer bets, to a fabulous amount, that Jasper Losely lost the rubber.

Having lifted his friend into this region of aerial castles, Jasper then, descending into the practical world, wound up with the mournful fact that one could not get to Petersburg, nor, when there, into swell sets, without having some little capital on hand.

"I tell you what we will do. Madame Caumartin lives in prime style. Get old Latham, your employer, to discount her bill at three months' date, for £500, and we will be off in a crack." Poole shook his head. "Old Latham is too knowing a file for that — a foreigner! He'd want security."

"I'll be security."

Dolly shook his head a second time, still more emphatically than the first.

"But you say he does discount paper — gets rich on it?"

"Yes, gets rich on it, which he might not do if he discounted the paper you propose. No offense."

"Oh, no offense among friends! You have taken him bills which he has discounted?"

"Yes, good paper."

"Any paper signed by good names is good paper. We can sign good names if we know their handwritings."

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Dolly started and turned white. Knave he was—cheat at cards, blackleg on the turf—but forgery! that crime was new to him. The very notion of it brought on a return of fever. And while Jasper was increasing his malady by arguing with his apprehensions, luckily for Poole, Uncle Sam came in. Uncle Sam, a sagacious old tradesman, no sooner clapped eyes on the brilliant Losely than he conceived for him a distrustful repugnance, similar to that with which an experienced gander may regard a fox in colloquy with its gosling. He had already learned enough of his godson's ways and chosen society to be assured that Samuel Dolly had indulged in very anti-commercial tastes, and been sadly contaminated by very anti-commercial friends. He felt persuaded that Dolly's sole chance of redemption was in working on his mind while his body was still suffering, so that Poole might, on recovery, break with all former associations. On seeing Jasper in the dress of an exquisite, with the thews of a prize-fighter, Uncle Sam saw the stalwart incarnation of all the sins which a godfather had vowed that a godson should renounce. Accordingly, he made himself so disagreeable, that Losely, in great disgust, took a hasty departure. And Uncle Sam, as he helped the nurse to plunge Dolly into his bed, had the brutality to tell his nephew, in very plain terms, that if ever he found that Brummagem gent in Poole's rooms again, Poole would never again see the color of Uncle Sam's money. Dolly beginning to blubber, the good man, relenting, patted him on the back, and said, "But as soon

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as you are well, I'll carry you with me to my country box, and keep you out of harm's way till I find you a wife, who will comb your head for you!"—at which cheering prospect Poole blubbered more dolefully than before. On retiring to his own lodging in the Gloucester coffee-house, Uncle Sam, to make all sure, gave positive orders to Poole's landlady, who respected in Uncle Sam the man who might pay what Poole owed to her, on no account to let in any of Dolly's profligate friends, but especially the chap he had found there; adding, "'Tis as much as my nephew's life is worth, and, what is more to the purpose, as much as your bill is." Accordingly, when Jasper presented himself at Poole's door again that very evening, the landlady apprised him of her orders; and, proof to his insinuating remonstrances, closed the door in his face. But a French chronicler has recorded that, when Henry IV. was besieging Paris, though not a loaf of bread could enter the walls, love-letters passed between city and camp as easily as if there had been no siege at all. And does not Mercury preside over money as well as love? Jasper, spurred on by Madame Caumartin, who was exceedingly anxious to exchange London for Petersburg as soon as possible, maintained a close and frequent correspondence with Poole by the agency of the nurse, who luckily was not above being bribed by shillings. Poole continued to reject the villainy proposed by Jasper; but, in the course of the correspondence, he threw out, rather incoherently—for his mind began somewhat to wander—a scheme equally

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flagitious, which Jasper, aided perhaps by Madame Caumartin's yet keener wit, caught up, and quickly reduced to deliberate method. Old Mr. Latham, among the bills he discounted, kept those of such more bashful customers as stipulated that their resort to temporary accommodation should be maintained a profound secret, in his own safe. Among these bills Poole knew that there was one for £1000, given by a young nobleman of immense estates, but so entailed that he could neither sell nor mortgage, and therefore often in need of a few hundreds for pocket-money. The nobleman's name stood high. His fortune was universally known; his honor unimpeachable. A bill of his any one would cash at sight. Could Poole but obtain that bill! It had, he believed, only a few weeks yet to run. Jasper, or Madame Caumartin might get it discounted even by Lord ——'s own banker; and if that were too bold, by any professional bill-broker; and all three be off before a suspicion could arise. But to get at that safe a false key might be necessary. Poole suggested a waxen impression of the lock. Jasper sent him a readier contrivance — a queer-looking tool that looked an instrument of torture. All now necessary was for Poole to recover sufficiently to return to business, and to get rid of Uncle Sam by a promise to run down to the country the moment Poole had conscientiously cleared some necessary arrears of work. While this correspondence went on, Jasper Losely shunned Mrs. Crane, and took his meals and spent his leisure hours with Madame Caumartin. He needed no dressing-gown and slippers

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to feel himself at home there. Madame Caumartin had really taken a showy house in a genteel street. Her own appearance was eminently what the French call *distinguée.* Dressed to perfection, from head to foot; neat and finished as an epigram. Her face, in shape like a thorough-bred cobra capella—low, smooth frontal, widening at the summit; chin tapering, but jaw strong; teeth marvelously white, small, and with points sharp as those in the maw of the fish called the "Sea Devil;" eyes like dark emeralds, of which the pupils, when she was angry or when she was scheming, retreated upward toward the temples, emitting a luminous green ray that shot through space like the gleam that escapes from a dark lantern; complexion superlatively feminine — call it not pale, but white, as if she lived on blanched almonds, peachstones, and arsenic; hands so fine and so bloodless, with fingers so pointedly taper there seemed stings at their tips; manners of one who had ranged all ranks of society, from highest to lowest, and duped the most wary in each of them. Did she please it, a crown prince might have thought her youth must have passed in the chambers of porphyry! Did she please it, an old soldier would have sworn the creature had been a *vivandière.* In age, perhaps bordering on forty. She looked younger; but had she been a hundred and twenty she could not have been more wicked. Ah! happy, indeed, for Sophy, if it were to save her youth from ever being fostered in elegant boudoirs by those bloodless hands, that the crippled vagabond had borne her away from Arabella's less cruel un-

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kindness; better far even Rugge's village stage; better far stealthy by-lanes, feigned names, and the erudite tricks of Sir Isaac!

But still it is due even to Jasper to state here that in Losely's recent design to transfer Sophy from Waife's care to that of Madame Caumartin, the Sharper harbored no idea of a villainy so execrable as the character of the *Parisienne* led the jealous Arabella to suspect. But his real object in getting the child, at that time, once more into his power was (whatever its nature) harmless compared with the mildest of Arabella's dark doubts. But still, if Sophy *had* been regained, and the object on regaining her foiled (as it probably would have been), what *then* might have become of her? — lost, perhaps, forever to Waife — in a foreign land, and under such guardianship? Grave question, which Jasper Losely, who exercised so little foresight in the paramount question, viz., what, some day or other, will become of himself, was not likely to rack his brains by conjecturing!

Meanwhile Mrs. Crane was vigilant. The detective police-officer, sent to her by Mr. Rugge, could not give her the information which Rugge desired, and which she did not longer need. She gave the detective some information respecting Madame Caumartin. One day, toward the evening, she was surprised by a visit from Uncle Sam. He called ostensibly to thank her for her kindness to his godson and nephew; and to beg her not to be offended if he had been rude to Mr. Losely, who, he understood from Dolly, was a particular friend of hers. "You see,

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ma'am, Samuel Dolly is a weak young man, and easily led astray; but, luckily for himself, he has no money and no stomach. So he may repent in time; and if I could find a wife to manage him, he has not a bad head for the main chance, and may become a practical man. Repeatedly I have told him he should go to prison, but that was only to frighten him — fact is, I want to get him safe down into the country, and he don't take to that. So I am forced to say, 'My box, home-brewed and south-down, Samuel Dolly, or a Lunnon jail, and debtors' allowance.' Must give a young man his choice, my dear lady."

Mrs. Crane, observing that what he said was extremely sensible, Uncle Sam warmed in his confidence.

"And I thought I had him, till I found Mr. Losely in his sick-room; but ever since that day, I don't know how it is, the lad has had something on his mind, which I don't half like — cracky, I think, my dear lady — cracky. I suspect that old nurse passes letters. I taxed her with it, and she immediately wanted to take her Bible-oath, and smelt of gin — two things which, taken together, look guilty."

"But," said Mrs. Crane, growing much interested, "if Mr. Losely and Mr. Poole do correspond, what then?"

"That's what I want to know, ma'am. Excuse me; I don't wish to disparage Mr. Losely — a dashing gent, and nothing worse, I dare say. But certain sure I am that he has put into Samuel Dolly's head something which has cracked it! There is the lad now up and dressed, when he ought to be in bed, and swearing he'll

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go to old Latham's to-morrow, and that long arrears of work are on his conscience! Never heard him talk of conscience before — that looks guilty! And it does not frighten him any longer when I say he shall go to prison for his debts; and he's very anxious to get me out of Lunnon; and when I threw in a word about Mr. Losely (slyly, my good lady — just to see its effect), he grew as white as that paper; and then he began strutting and swelling, and saying that Mr. Losely would be a great man, and that he should be a great man, and that he did not care for my money — he could get as much money as he liked. That looks guilty, my dear lady. And, oh," cried Uncle Sam, clasping his hands, "I do fear that he's thinking of something worse than he has ever done before, and his brain can't stand it. And, ma'am, he has a great respect for you; and you've a friendship for Mr. Losely. Now just suppose that Mr. Losely should have been thinking of what your flash sporting gents call a harmless spree, and my sister's son should, being cracky, construe it into something criminal. Oh, Mrs. Crane, do go and see Mr. Losely, and tell him that Samuel Dolly is not safe — is not safe!"

"Much better that I should go to your nephew," said Mrs. Crane; "and with your leave I will do so at once. Let me see him alone. Where shall I find you afterward?"

"At the Gloucester Coffee-house. Oh, my dear lady, how can I thank you enough. The boy can be nothing to you; but to me, he's my sister's son—the blackguard!"

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CHAPTER XVII

Dices laborantes in uno
Penelopen vitreamque Circen. — HORAT.

MRS. CRANE found Poole in his little sitting-room, hung round with prints of opera-dancers, prize-fighters, race-horses, and the dog Billy. Samuel Dolly was in full dress. His cheeks, usually so pale, seemed much flushed. He was evidently in a state of high excitement, bowed extremely low to Mrs. Crane, called her Countess, asked if she had been lately on the Continent, and if she knew Madame Caumartin; and whether the nobility at St. Petersburg were jolly, or stuck-up fellows, who gave themselves airs — not waiting for her answer. In fact his mind was unquestionably disordered.

Arabella Crane abruptly laid her hand on his shoulder. "You are going to the gallows," she said, suddenly. "Down on your knees and tell me all, and I will keep your secret, and save you; lie — and you are lost!"

Poole burst into tears, and dropped on his knees as he was told.

In ten minutes Mrs. Crane knew all that she cared to know, possessed herself of Losely's letters, and, leaving Poole less light-headed and more light-hearted, she hastened to Uncle Sam at the Gloucester Coffee-house. "Take your nephew out of town this evening, and do not

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let him from your sight for the next six months. Hark you, he will never be a good man; but you may save him from the hulks, Do so. Take my advice." She was gone before Uncle Sam could answer.

She next proceeded to the private house of the detective with whom she had before conferred — this time less to give than to receive information. Not half an hour after her interview with him, Arabella Crane stood in the street wherein was placed the showy house of Madame Caumartin. The lamps in the street were now lighted— the street, even at day, a quiet one, was comparatively deserted. All the windows in the Frenchwoman's house were closed with shutters and curtains, except on the drawing-room floor. From those the lights within streamed over a balcony filled with gay plants — one of the casements was partially open. And now and then, where the watcher stood, she could just catch the glimpse of a passing form behind the muslin draperies, or hear the sound of some louder laugh. In her dark-gray dress, and still darker mantle, Arabella Crane stood motionless, her eyes fixed on those windows. The rare foot-passenger who brushed by her turned involuntarily to glance at the countenance of one so still, and then as involuntarily to survey the house to which that countenance was lifted. No such observer so incurious as not to hazard conjecture what evil to that house was boded by the dark lurid eyes that watched it with so fixed a menace. Thus she remained, sometimes, indeed, moving from her post, as a sentry moves from his, slowly pacing a few steps to and

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fro, returning to the same place, and again motionless; thus she remained for hours. Evening deepened into night — night grew near to dawn; she was still there in that street, and still her eyes were on that house. At length the door opened noiselessly — a tall man tripped forth with a light step, and humming the tune of a gay French *chanson*. As he came straight toward the spot where Arabella Crane was at watch, from her dark mantle stretched forth her long arm and lean hand, and seized him. He started, and recognized her.

"You here!" he exclaimed — "you! — at such an hour! — you!"

"I, Jasper Losely, here to warn you. To-morrow the officers of justice will be in that accursed house. To-morrow that woman — not for her worst crimes, they elude the law, but for her least, by which the law hunts her down — will be a prisoner. No — you shall not return to warn her as I warn you" (for Jasper here broke away, and retreated some steps toward the house); "or, if you do, share her fate. I cast you off."

"What do you mean?" said Jasper, halting, till with slow steps she regained his side. "Speak more plainly: if poor Madame Caumartin has got into a scrape, which I don't think likely, what have I to do with it?"

"The woman you call Caumartin fled from Paris to escape its tribunals. She has been tracked; the French Government have claimed her. Ho! you smile. This does not touch you."

"Certainly not."

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"But there are charges against her from English tradesmen, and if it be proved that you knew her in her proper name — the infamous Gabrielle Desmarets — if it be proved that you have passed off the French *billets de banque* that she stole — if you were her accomplice in obtaining goods under her false name — if you, enriched by her robberies, were aiding and abetting her as a swindler here, though you may be safe from the French law, will you be safe from the English? You may be innocent, Jasper Losely; if so, fear nothing. You may be guilty; if so, hide, or follow me!"

Jasper paused. His first impulse was to trust implicity to Mrs. Crane, and lose not a moment in profiting by such counsels of concealment or flight as an intelligence so superior to his own could suggest. But suddenly remembering that Poole had undertaken to get the bill for £1000 by the next day — that if flight were necessary, there was yet a chance of flight with booty — his constitutional hardihood, and the grasping cupidity by which it was accompanied, made him resolve at least to hazard the delay of a few hours. And after all, might not Mrs. Crane exaggerate? Was not this the counsel of a jealous woman? "Pray," said he, moving on, and fixing quick keen eyes on her as she walked by his side, "pray, how did you learn all these particulars?"

"From a detective policeman employed to discover Sophy. In conferring with him, the name of Jasper Losely as her legal protector was of course stated: that name was already coupled with the name of the false

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Caumartin. Thus, indirectly, the child you would have consigned to that woman, saves you from sharing that woman's ignominy and doom."

"Stuff!" said Jasper, stubbornly, though he winced at her words; "I don't, on reflection, see that any thing can be proved against me. I am not bound to know why a lady changes her name, nor how she comes by her money. And as to her credit with tradesmen — nothing to speak of; most of what she has got is paid for — what is not paid for her, is less than the worth of her goods. Pooh! I am not so easily frightened — much obliged to you all the same. Go home now; 'tis horridly late. Good-night, or rather good-morning."

"Jasper, mark me! if you see that woman again — if you attempt to save or screen her — I shall know, and you lose in me your last friend — last hope — last plank in a devouring sea!"

These words were so solemnly uttered that they thrilled the hard heart of the reckless man. "I have no wish to screen or save her," he said, with selfish sincerity. "And after what you have said, I would as soon enter a fire-ship as that house. But let me have some hours to consider what is best to be done."

"Yes, consider — I shall expect you to-morrow."

He went his way up the twilight streets toward a new lodging he had hired not far from the showy house. She drew her mantle closer round her gaunt figure, and, taking the opposite direction, threaded thoroughfares yet lonelier, till she gained her door, and was welcomed back by the faithful Bridgett.

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CHAPTER XVIII

Hope tells a flattering tale to Mr. Rugge. He is undeceived by a Solicitor, and left to mourn; but in turn, though unconsciously, Mr. Rugge deceives the Solicitor, and the Solicitor deceives his client, which is 6*s*. 8*d*. in the Solicitor's pocket.

THE next morning Arabella Crane was scarcely dressed before Mr. Rugge knocked at her door. On the previous day the Detective had informed him that William and Sophy Waife were discovered to have sailed for America. Frantic, the unhappy manager rushed to the steam-packet office, and was favored by an inspection of the books, which confirmed the hateful tidings. As if in mockery of his bereaved and defrauded state, on returning home he found a polite note from Mr. Gotobed, requesting him to call at the office of that eminent solicitor, with reference to a young actress named Sophy Waife, and hinting "that the visit might prove to his advantage!" Dreaming for a wild moment that Mr. Losely, conscience-stricken, might through this solicitor pay back his £100, he rushed incontinent to Mr. Gotobed's office, and was at once admitted into the presence of that stately practitioner.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said Mr. Gotobed, with formal politeness, "but I heard a day or two ago accidentally from my head-clerk, who had learned it also accident-

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ally from a sporting friend, that you were exhibiting at Humberston, during the race-week, a young actress named on the play-bills (here is one) 'Juliet Araminta,' and whom, as I am informed, you had previously exhibited in Surrey and elsewhere; but she was supposed to have relinquished that earlier engagement, and left your stage with her grandfather, William Waife. I am instructed by a distinguished client, who is wealthy, and who, from motives of mere benevolence, interests himself in the said William and Sophy Waife, to discover their residence. Please, therefore, to render up the child to my charge, apprising me also of the address of her grandfather, if he be not with you; and without waiting for further instructions from my client, who is abroad, I will venture to say that any sacrifice in the loss of your juvenile actress will be most liberally compensated."

"Sir," cried the miserable and imprudent Rugge, "I paid £100 for that fiendish child — a three years' engagement — and I have been robbed. Restore me the £100, and I will tell you where she is, and her vile grandfather also."

At hearing so bad a character lavished upon objects recommended to his client's disinterested charity, the wary solicitor drew in his pecuniary horns.

"Mr. Rugge," said he, "I understand from your words that you cannot place the child Sophy, *alias* Julia Araminta, in my hands. You ask £100 to inform me where she is. Have you a lawful claim on her?"

"Certainly, Sir; she is my property."

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"Then it is quite clear that though you may know where she is, you cannot get at her yourself, and cannot, therefore, place her in my hands. Perhaps she is — in heaven!"

"Confound her, Sir! no — in America! or on the seas to it."

"Are you sure?"

"I have just come from the steam-packet office, and seen the names in their book. William and Sophy Waife sailed from Liverpool last Thursday week."

"And they formed an engagement with you — received your money; broke the one, absconded with the other. Bad characters indeed!"

"Bad! you may well say that — a set of swindling scoundrels, the whole kit and kin. And the ingratitude!" continued Rugge: "I was more than a father to that child" (he began to whimper): "I had a babe of my own once — died of convulsions in teething. I thought that child would have supplied its place, and I dreamed of the York Theater; but"— here his voice was lost in the folds of a marvellously dirty red pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. Gotobed having now, however, learned all that he cared to learn, and not being a soft-hearted man (first-rate solicitors rarely are), here pulled out his watch, and said:

"Sir, you have been very ill-treated, I perceive. I must wish you good-day; I have an engagement in the City. I cannot help you back to your £100, but accept this trifle (a £5 note) for your loss of time in calling"

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(ringing the bell violently). "Door — show out this gentleman."

That evening Mr. Gotobed wrote at length to Guy Darrell, informing him that, after great pains and prolonged research, he had been so fortunate as to ascertain that the strolling player and little girl whom Mr. Darrell had so benevolently requested him to look up, were very bad characters, and had left the country for the United States, as, happily for England, bad characters were wont to do.

That letter reached Guy Darrell when he was far away, amidst the forlorn pomp of some old Italian city, and Lionel's tale of the little girl not very fresh in his gloomy thoughts. Naturally, he supposed that the boy had been duped by a pretty face and his own inexperienced kindly heart. And so and so — why, so end half the efforts of men who intrust to others the troublesome execution of humane intentions! The scales of early justice are poised in their quivering equilibrium, not by huge hundredweights, but by infinitesimal grains, needing the most wary caution — the most considerate patience — the most delicate touch, to arrange or readjust. Few of our errors, national or individual, come from the design to be unjust — most of them from sloth, or incapacity to grapple with the difficulties of being just. Sins of commission may not, perhaps, shock the retrospect of conscience. Large and obtrusive to view, we have confessed, mourned, repented, possibly atoned them. Sins of omission, so vailed amidst our hourly emotions — blent, confused, unseen, in

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the conventional routine of existence.— Alas! could *these* suddenly emerge from their shadow, group together in serried mass and accusing order — alas, alas! would not the best of us then start in dismay, and would not the proudest humble himself at the Throne of Mercy!

CHAPTER XIX.

Joy, nevertheless, does return to Mr. Rugge; and Hope now inflicts herself on Mrs. Crane. A very fine-looking Hope, too — six feet, one — strong as Achilles, and as fleet of foot!

But we have left Mr. Rugge at Mrs. Crane's door; admit him. He bursts into her drawing-room, wiping his brows.

"Ma'am, they are off to America — !"

"So I have heard. You are fairly entitled to the return of your money —"

"Entitled, of course; but —"

"There it is; restore to me the contract for the child's services."

Rugge gazed on a roll of bank-notes, and could scarcely believe his eyes. He darted forth his hand, the notes receded like the dagger in Macbeth, "First the contract," said Mrs. Crane. Rugge drew out his greasy pocket-book, and extracted the worthless engagement.

"Henceforth, then," said Mrs. Crane, "you have no right to complain; and whether or not the girl ever again fall in your way, your claim over her ceases."

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"The gods be praised, it does, ma'am; I have had quite enough of her. But you are every inch a lady, and allow me to add that I put you on my free list for life."

Rugge gone; Arabella Crane summoned Bridgett to her presence.

"Lor, miss," cried Bridgett, impulsively, "who'd think you'd been up all night raking! I have not seen you look so well this many a year."

"Ah," said Arabella Crane, "I will tell you why. I have done what for many a year I never thought I should do again — a good action. That child — that Sophy — you remember how cruelly I used her?"

"Oh, miss, don't go for to blame yourself; you fed her, you clothed her, when her own father, the villing, sent her away from hisself to you — you of all people — *you*. How could *you* be caressing and fawning on his child — their child?"

Mrs. Crane hung her head gloomily. "What is past is past. I have lived to save that child, and a curse seems lifted from my soul. Now listen; I shall leave London — England, probably this evening. You will keep this house; it will be ready for me any moment I return. The agent who collects my house-rents will give you money as you want it. Stint not yourself, Bridgett. I have been saving, and saving, and saving, for dreary years—nothing else to interest me — and I am richer than I seem."

"But where are you going, miss?" said Bridgett, slowly recovering from the stupefaction occasioned by her mistress' announcement.

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"I don't know — I don't care."

"Oh, gracious stars! is it with that dreadful Jasper Losely? — it is, it is. You are crazed, you are bewitched, miss!"

"Possibly I am crazed — possibly bewitched; but I take that man's life to mine as a penance for all the evil mine has ever known; and a day or two since I should have said, with rage and shame, 'I cannot help it; I loathe myself that I can care what becomes of him.' Now, without rage, without shame, I say, 'The man whom I once so loved shall not die on a gibbet if I can help it; and, please Heaven, help it I will.'"

The grim woman folded her arms on her breast, and raising her head to its full height, there was in her face and air a stern gloomy grandeur, which could not have been seen without a mixed sensation of compassion and awe.

"Go, now, Bridgett; I have said all. He will be here soon; he will come — he must come — he has no choice; and then — and then —" she closed her eyes, bowed her head, and shivered.

Arabella Crane was, as usual, right in her predictions. Before noon Jasper came — came, not with his jocund swagger, but with that sidelong sinister look — look of the man whom the world cuts — triumphantly restored to its former place in his visage. Madame Caumartin had been arrested; Poole had gone into the country with Uncle Sam; Jasper had seen a police-officer at the door of his own lodgings. He slunk away from the fashionable

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thoroughfares — slunk to the recesses of Poddon Place — slunk into Arabella Crane's prim drawing-room, and said, sullenly: "All is up; here I am!"

Three days afterward, in a quiet street in a quiet town of Belgium, wherein a sharper, striving to live by his profession, would soon become a skeleton, in a commodious airy apartment, looking upon a magnificent street, the reverse of noisy, Jasper Losely sat secure, innocuous, and profoundly miserable. In another house, the windows of which, facing those of Jasper's sitting-room, from an upper story, commanded so good a view therein that it placed him under a surveillance akin to that designed by Mr. Bentham's reformatory Panopticon, sat Arabella Crane. Whatever her real feelings toward Jasper Losely (and what those feelings were no virile pen can presume authoritatively to define — for lived there ever a man who thoroughly—thoroughly understood a woman?), or whatever in earlier life might have been their reciprocated vows of eternal love, not only from the day that Jasper, on his return to his native shores, presented himself in Poddon Place, had their intimacy been restricted to the austerest bounds of friendship; but after Jasper had so rudely declined the hand which now fed him, Arabella Crane had probably perceived that her sole chance of retaining intellectual power over his lawless being, necessitated the utter relinquishment of every hope or project that could expose her again to his contempt. Suiting appearances to reality, the decorum of a separate house was essential to the maintenance of that authority with

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which the rigid nature of their intercourse invested her. The additional cost strained her pecuniary resources, but she saved in her own accommodation in order to leave Jasper no cause to complain of any stinting in his. There, then, she sate by her window, herself unseen, eyeing him in his opposite solitude, accepting for her own life a barren sacrifice, but a jealous sentinel on his. Meditating as she sate, and as she eyed him — meditating what employment she could invent, with the bribe of emoluments to be paid furtively by her—for those strong hands that could have felled an ox, but were nerveless in turning an honest penny — and for that restless mind, hungering for occupation, with the digestion of an ostrich for dice and debauch, riot and fraud, but queasy as an exhausted dyspeptic at the reception of one innocent amusement, one honorable toil. But while that woman still schemes how to rescue from hulks or halter that execrable man, who shall say that he is without a chance? A chance he has — WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

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BOOK FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

Envy will be a science when it learns the use of the microscope.

When leaves fall and flowers fade, great people are found in their country seats. Look! — that is Montfort Court! A place of regal magnificence, so far as extent of pile and amplitude of domain could satisfy the pride of ownership, or inspire the visitor with the respect due to wealth and power. An artist could have made nothing of it. The Sumptuous everywhere — the Picturesque nowhere. The House was built in the reign of George I., when first commenced that horror of the Beautiful, as something in bad taste, which, agreeably to our natural love of progress, progressively advanced through the reigns of succeeding Georges. An enormous *façade* — in dull brown brick — two wings and a center, with double flights of steps to the hall door from the carriage-sweep. No trees allowed to grow too near the house; in front, a stately flat with stone balustrades. But wherever the eye turned there was nothing to be seen but park — miles upon miles of park — not a cornfield in sight — not a roof-tree — not a spire — only those

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lata silentia — still widths of turf, and, somewhat thinly scattered and afar, those groves of giant trees. The whole prospect so vast and so monotonous that it never tempted you to take a walk. No close-neighboring poetic thicket into which to plunge, uncertain whither you would emerge; no devious stream to follow. The very deer, fat and heavy, seemed bored by pastures it would take them a week to traverse. People of moderate wishes and modest fortunes never envied Montfort Court; they admired it — they were proud to say they had seen it. But never did they say,

"Oh, that for me some home like this would smile!"

Not so, very — *very* great people! — *they* rather coveted than admired. Those oak-trees so large, yet so undecayed — that park, eighteen miles at least in circumference — that solid palace which, without inconvenience, could entertain and stow away a king and his whole court — in short, all that evidence of a princely territory, and a weighty rent-roll, made English dukes respectfully envious, and foreign potentates gratifyingly jealous.

But turn from the front. Open the gate in that stone balustrade. Come southward to the garden side of the house. Lady Montfort's flower-garden. Yes; not so dull! flowers, even autumnal flowers, enliven any sward. Still, on so large a scale, and so little relief; so little mystery about those broad gravel walks; not a winding alley any where. Oh for a vulgar summer-house; for some alcove, all honey-suckle and ivy! But the dahlias are splendid! Very true; only dahlias, at the best, are

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such uninteresting prosy things. What poet ever wrote upon a dahlia! Surely Lady Montfort might have introduced a little more taste here — shown a little more fancy! Lady Montfort! I should like to see my lord's face, if Lady Montfort took any such liberty. But there is Lady Montfort walking slowly along that broad, broad, broad gravel walk — those splendid dahlias, on either side, in their set parterres. There she walks, in full evidence from all those sixty remorseless windows on the garden front, each window exactly like the other. There she walks, looking wistfully to the far end — ('tis a long way off) — where, happily, there is a wicket that carries a persevering pedestrian out of sight of the sixty windows, into shady walks, toward the banks of that immense piece of water, two miles from the house. My lord has not returned from his moor in Scotland — my lady is alone. No company in the house — it is like saying, "No acquaintance in a city.', But the retinue is full. Though she dined alone, she might, had she pleased, have had almost as many servants to gaze upon her as there were windows now staring at her lonely walk, with their glassy spectral eyes.

Just as Lady Montfort gains the wicket she is overtaken by a visitor, walking fast from the gravel sweep by the front door, where he has dismounted — where he has caught sight of her; any one so dismounting might have caught sight of her — could not help it. Gardens so fine, were made on purpose for fine persons walking in them to be seen.

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"Ah, Lady Montfort," said the visitor, stammering painfully, "I am so glad to find you at home."

"At home, George!" said the lady, extending her hand; "where else is it likely that I should be found? But how pale you are! What has happened?"

She seated herself on a bench, under a cedar-tree, just without the wicket, and George Morley, our old friend the Oxonian, seated himself by her side familiarly, but with a certain reverence. Lady Montfort was a few years older than himself — his cousin — he had known her from his childhood.

"What has happened!" he repeated, "nothing new. I have just come from visiting the good bishop."

"He does not hesitate to ordain you?"

"No — but I shall never ask him to do so."

"My dear cousin, are you not overscrupulous? You would be an ornament to the Church, sufficient in all else to justify your compulsory omission of one duty, which a curate could perform for you."

Morley shook his head sadly. "One duty omitted!" said he. "But is it not that duty which distinguishes the priest from the layman? and how far extends that duty? Wherever there needs a voice to speak the Word; not in the pulpit only, but at the hearth, by the sick bed; *there* should be the Pastor! No — I cannot, I ought not, I dare not! Incompetent as the laborer, how can I be worthy of the hire?" It took him long to bring out these words; his emotion increased his infirmity. Lady Montfort listened with an exquisite respect, visible in her compassion, and paused long before she answered.

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George Morley was the younger son of a country gentleman, with a good estate settled upon the elder son. George's father had been an intimate friend of his kinsman, the Marquis of Montfort (predecessor and grandsire of the present lord); and the Marquis had, as he thought, amply provided for George in undertaking to secure to him, when of fitting age, the living of Humberston, the most lucrative preferment in his gift. The living had been held for the last fifteen years by an incumbent, now very old, upon the honorable understanding that it was to be resigned in favor of George should George take orders. The young man from his earliest childhood thus destined to the Church, devoted to the prospect of that profession all his studies, all his thoughts. Not till he was sixteen did his infirmity of speech make itself seriously perceptible; and then elocution masters undertook to cure it — they failed. But George's mind continued in the direction toward which it had been so systematically biased. Entering Oxford, he became absorbed in its academical shades. Amidst its books he almost forgot the impediment of his speech. Shy, taciturn, and solitary he mixed too little with others to have it much brought before his own notice. He carried off prizes — he took high honors. On leaving the university, a profound theologian — an enthusiastic Churchman — filled with the most earnest sense of the pastor's solemn calling — he was thus complimentarily accosted by the Archimandrite of his college, "What a pity you can not go into the Church!"

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"Can not—but I *am* going into the Church."

"You, is it possible? But perhaps you are sure of a living—"

"Yes—Humberston."

"An immense living, but a very large population. Certainly it is in the bishop's own discretionary power to ordain you, and for all the duties you can keep a curate. But—" The Don stopped short, and took snuff.

That "But" said as plainly as words could say, "It may be a good thing for you, but is it fair for the Church?"

So George Morley, at least, thought that "But" implied. His conscience took alarm. He was a thoroughly noble-hearted man, likely to be the more tender of conscience where tempted by worldly interests. With that living he was rich, without it very poor. But to give up a calling, to the idea of which he had attached himself with all the force of a powerful and zealous nature, was to give up the whole scheme and dream of his existence. He remained irresolute for some time; at last he wrote to the present Lord Montfort, intimating his doubts, and relieving the Marquis from the engagement which his lordship's predecessor had made. The present Marquis was not a man capable of understanding such scruples. But, luckily perhaps for George and for the Church, the larger affairs of the great House of Montfort were not administered by the Marquis. The parliamentary influences, the ecclesiastical preferments, together with the practical direction of minor agents to the vast and complicated estates attached to the title, were at that time

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under the direction of Mr. Carr Vipont, a powerful member of Parliament, and husband to that Lady Selina whose condescension had so disturbed the nerves of Frank Vance the artist. Mr. Carr Vipont governed this vice-royalty according to the rules and traditions by which the House of Montfort had become great and prosperous. For not only every state, but every great seigniorial House has its hereditary maxims of policy; not less the House of Montfort than the House of Hapsburg. Now the House of Montfort made it a rule that all admitted to be members of the family should help each other; that the head of the House should never, if it could be avoided, suffer any of its branches to decay and wither into poverty. The House of Montfort also held it a duty to foster and make the most of every species of talent that could swell the influence, or adorn the annals of the family. Having rank, having wealth, it sought also to secure intellect, and to knit together into solid union, throughout all ramifications of kinship and cousinhood, each variety of repute and power that could root the ancient tree more firmly in the land. Agreeably to this traditional policy, Mr. Carr Vipont not only desired that a Vipont Morley should not lose a very good thing, but that a very good thing should not lose a Vipont Morley of high academical distinction — a Vipont Morley who might be a bishop! He therefore drew up an admirable letter, which the Marquis signed—that the Marquis should take the trouble of copying it was out of the question — wherein Lord Montfort was made to express great admiration of the disinterested

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delicacy of sentiment, which proved George Vipont Morley to be still more fitted to the cure of souls; and, placing rooms at Montfort Court at his service (the Marquis not being himself there at the moment), suggested that George should talk the matter over with the present incumbent of Humberston (that town was not many miles distant from Montfort Court), who, though he had no impediment in his speech, still never himself preached or read prayers, owing to an affection of the trachea, and who was, nevertheless, a most efficient clergyman. George Morley, therefore, had gone down to Montfort Court some months ago, just after his interview with Mrs. Crane. He had then accepted an invitation to spend a week or two with the Rev. Mr. Allsop, the Rector of Humberston —a clergyman of the old school, a fair scholar, a perfect gentleman, a man of the highest honor, good-natured, charitable, but who took pastoral duties much more easily than good clergymen of the new school — be they high or low — are disposed to do. Mr. Allsop, who was then in his eightieth year, a bachelor with a very good fortune of his own, was perfectly willing to fulfill the engagement on which he held his living, and render it up to George; but he was touched by the earnestness with which George assured him that at all events he would not consent to displace the venerable incumbent from a tenure he had so long and honorably held — and would wait till the living was vacated in the ordinary course of nature. Mr. Allsop conceived a warm affection for the young scholar. He had a grandniece staying with him on his visit, who less

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openly, but not less warmly, shared that affection; and with her George Morley fell shyly and timorously in love. With that living he would be rich enough to marry — without it, no. Without it he had nothing but a fellowship, which matrimony would forfeit, and the scanty portion of a country squire's younger son. The young lady herself was dowerless, for Allsop's fortune was so settled that no share of it would come to his grandniece. Another reason for conscience to gulp down that unhappy impediment of speech! Certainly, during this visit, Morley's scruples relaxed; but when he returned home they came back with greater force than ever — with greater force, because he felt that now not only a spiritual ambition, but a human love was a casuist in favor of self-interest. He had returned on a visit to Humberston Rectory about a week previous to the date of this chapter — the niece was not there. Sternly he had forced himself to examine a little more closely into the condition of the flock which (if he accepted the charge) he would have to guide, and the duties that devolved upon the chief pastor in a populous trading town. He became appalled. Humberston, like most towns under the political influence of a Great House, was rent by parties. One party, who succeeded in returning one of the two members for Parliament, all for the House of Montfort; the other party, who returned also their member, all against it. By one half the town, whatever came from Montfort Court was sure to be regarded with a most malignant and distorted vision. Meanwhile, though Mr. Allsop was popular with

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the higher classes, and with such of the extreme poor as his charity relieved, his pastoral influence generally was a dead letter. His curate, who preached for him — a good young man enough, but extremely dull — was not one of those men who fill a church. Tradesmen wanted an excuse to stay away or choose another place of worship; and they contrived to hear some passage in the sermons, over which, while the curate mumbled, they habitually slept — that they declared to be "Puseyite." The church became deserted: and about the same time a very eloquent Dissenting minister appeared at Humberston, and even professed churchfolks went to hear him. George Morley, alas! perceived that at Humberston, if the Church there were to hold her own, a powerful and popular preacher was essentially required. His mind was now made up. At Carr Vipont's suggestion, the bishop of the diocese, being then at his palace, had sent to see him; and, while granting the force of his scruples, had yet said, "Mine is the main responsibility. But if you ask me to ordain you, I will do so without hesitation; for if the Church wants preachers, it also wants deep scholars and virtuous pastors." Fresh from this interview, George Morley came to announce to Lady Montfort that his resolve was unshaken. She, I have said, paused long before she answered. "George," she began at last, in a voice so touchingly sweet that its very sound was balm to a wounded spirit — "I must not argue with you — I bow before the grandeur of your motives, and I will not say that you are not right. One thing I do feel, that if

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you thus sacrifice your inclinations and interests from scruples so pure and holy, you will never be to be pitied — you will never know regret. Poor or rich, single or wedded, a soul that so seeks to reflect heaven will be serene and blessed!" Thus she continued to address him for some time, he all the while inexpressibly soothed and comforted; then gradually she insinuated hopes even of a worldly and temporal kind — literature was left to him — the scholar's pen, if not the preacher's voice. In literature he might make a career that would lead on to fortune. There were places also in the public service to which a defect in speech was no obstacle. She knew his secret, modest attachment; she alluded to it just enough to encourage constancy and rebuke despair. As she ceased, his admiring and grateful consciousness of his cousin's rare qualities changed the tide of his emotions toward her from himself, and he exclaimed with an earnestness that almost wholly subdued his stutter.

"What a counselor you are! — what a soother! If Montfort were but less prosperous or more ambitious, what a treasure, either to console or to sustain, in a mind like yours!"

As those words were said, you might have seen at once why Lady Montfort was called haughty and reserved. Her lip seemed suddenly to snatch back its sweet smile — her dark eye, before so purely, softly friend-like, became coldly distant — the tones of her voice were not the same, as she answered —

"Lord Montfort values me, as it is, far beyond my

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merits — far," she added, with a different intonation, gravely mournful.

"Forgive me; I have displeased you. I did not mean it. Heaven forbid that I should presume either to disparage Lord Montfort — or — or to — " he stopped short, saving the hiatus by a convenient stammer. "Only," he continued, after a pause, "only forgive me this once. Recollect I was a little boy when you were a young lady, and I have pelted you with snow-balls, and called you 'Caroline.'" Lady Montfort suppressed a sigh, and gave the young scholar back her gracious smile, but not a smile that would have permitted him to call her "Caroline" again. She remained, indeed, a little more distant than usual during the rest of their interview, which was not much prolonged; for Morley felt annoyed with himself that he had so indiscreetly offended her, and seized an excuse to escape. "By-the-by," said he, "I have a letter from Mr. Carr Vipont, asking me to give him a sketch for a Gothic bridge to the water yonder. I will, with your leave, walk down and look at the proposed site. Only do say that you forgive me."

"Forgive you, Cousin George, oh yes. One word only — it is true you were a child still when I fancied I was a woman, and you have a right to talk to me upon all things, except those that relate to me and Lord Montfort; unless, indeed," she added, with a bewitching half laugh, "unless you ever see cause to scold me, there. Good-by, my cousin, and in turn forgive me, if I was so petulant. The Caroline you pelted with snow-balls was always a wayward, impul-

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sive creature, quick to take offense, to misunderstand, and — to repent."

Back into the broad, broad gravel-walk, walked, more slowly than before, Lady Montfort. Again the sixty ghastly windows stared at her with all their eyes — back from the gravel-walk, through a side-door, into the pompous solitude of the stately house — across long chambers, where the mirrors reflected her form, and the huge chairs, in their flaunting damask and flaring gold, stood stiff on desolate floors — into her own private room — neither large nor splendid that; plain chintzes, quiet book-shelves. She need not have been the Marchioness of Montfort to inhabit a room as pleasant and as luxurious. And the rooms that she could only have owned as Marchioness, what were those worth to her happiness? I know not. "Nothing," fine ladies will perhaps answer. Yet those same fine ladies will contrive to dispose their daughters to answer, "All." In her own room Lady Montfort sunk on her chair; wearily; — wearily she looked at the clock — wearily at the books on the shelves — at the harp near the window. Then she leaned her face on her hand, and that face was so sad, and so humbly sad, that you would have wondered how any one could call Lady Montfort proud.

"Treasure! I — I! — worthless, fickle, credulous fool! — I — I!"

The groom of the chambers entered with the letters by the afternoon post. That Great House contrived to

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worry itself with two posts a day. A royal command to Windsor —

"I shall be more alone in a court than here," murmured Lady Montfort.

CHAPTER II.

Truly saith the proverb, "Much corn lies under the straw that is not seen."

MEANWHILE George Morley followed the long shady walk — very handsome walk, full of prize roses and rare exotics—artificially winding, too—walk so well kept that it took thirty-four men to keep it — noble walk, tiresome walk — till it brought him to the great piece of water, which, perhaps, four times in the year was visited by the great folks in the Great House. And being thus out of the immediate patronage of fashion, the great piece of water really looked natural — companionable, refreshing — you began to breathe — to unbutton your waistcoat, loosen your neckcloth — quote Chaucer, if you could recollect him, or Cowper, or Shakspeare, or Thomson's Seasons; in short, any scraps of verse that came into your head — as your feet grew joyously entangled with fern — as the trees grouped forest-like before and round you—trees which there being out of sight, were allowed to grow too old to be worth five shillings apiece, moss-grown, hollow-trunked, some pollarded—trees invaluable! Ha! the hare! how she scuds! See, the deer marching

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down to the water-side. What groves of bulrushes — islands of water-lily! And to throw a Gothic bridge there, bring a great gravel road over the bridge! Oh, shame! shame!

So would have said the scholar, for he had a true sentiment for nature, if the bridge had not clean gone out of his head.

Wandering alone, he came at last to the most umbrageous and sequestered bank of the wide water, closed round on every side by brushwood, or still patriarchal trees.

Suddenly he arrested his steps—an idea struck him — one of those odd, whimsical, grotesque ideas which often when we are alone come across us, even in our quietest or most anxious moods. Was his infirmity really incurable? Elocution masters had said "Certainly not;" but they had done him no good. Yet had not the greatest orator the world ever knew a defect in utterance! He too, Demosthenes, had, no doubt, paid fees to elocution masters, the best in Athens, where elocution masters must have studied their art *ad unguem*, and the defect had baffled them. But did Demosthenes despair? No, he resolved to cure himself. — How? Was it not one of his methods to fill his mouth with pebbles, and practice manfully to the roaring sea? George Morley had never tried the effect of pebbles. Was there any virtue in them? Why not try? No sea there, it is true; but a sea was only useful as representing the noise of a stormy democratic audience. To represent a peaceful congregation

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that still sheet of water would do as well. Pebbles there were in plenty just by that gravelly cove, near which a young pike lay sunning his green back. Half in jest, half in earnest, the scholar picked up a handful of pebbles, wiped them from sand and mould, inserted them between his teeth cautiously, and, looking round to assure himself that none were by, began an extempore discourse. So interested did he become in that classical experiment, that he might have tortured the air and astonished the magpies (three of whom from a neighboring thicket listened perfectly spell-bound) for more than half an hour, when, seized with shame at the ludicrous impotence of his exertions—with despair that so wretched a barrier should stand between his mind and its expression — he flung away the pebbles, and, sinking on the ground, he fairly wept — wept like a baffled child.

The fact was, that Morley had really the temperament of an orator; he had the orator's gifts in warmth of passion, rush of thought, logical arrangement; there was in him the genius of a great preacher. He felt it — he knew it; and in that despair which only Genius knows, when some pitiful cause obstructs its energies and strikes down its powers — making a confidant of Solitude — he wept loud and freely.

"Do not despond, Sir; I undertake to cure you," said a voice behind.

George started up in confusion. A man, elderly, but fresh and vigorous, stood beside him, in a light fustian jacket, a blue apron, and with rushes in his hands, which

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he continued to plait together nimbly and deftly as he bowed to the startled scholar.

"I was in the shade of the thicket yonder, Sir; pardon me, I could not help hearing you."

The Oxonian rubbed his eyes, and stared at the man with a vague impression that he had seen him before — When? Where?

"You can cure me," he stuttered out; "what of? — the folly of trying to speak in public. Thank you, I am cured."

"Nay, Sir, you see before you a man who can make you a very good speaker. Your voice is naturally fine. I repeat I can cure a defect which is not in the organ, but in the management."

"You can! you — who and what are you?"

"A basket-maker, Sir; I hope for your custom."

"Surely this is not the first time I have seen you?"

"True; you once kindly suffered me to borrow a resting-place on your father's land. One good turn deserves another."

At that moment Sir Isaac peered through the brambles, and, restored to his original whiteness, and relieved from his false, horned ears, marched gravely toward the water, sniffed at the scholar, slightly wagged his tail, and buried himself among the reeds in search of a water-rat he had therein disturbed a week before, and always expected to find again.

The sight of the dog immediately cleared up the cloud

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in the scholar's memory; but with recognition came back a keen curiosity and a sharp pang of remorse.

"And your little girl?" he asked, looking down abashed.

"Better than she was when we last met. Providence is so kind to us."

Poor Waife, he never guessed that to the person he thus revealed himself he owed the grief for Sophy's abduction. He divined no reason for the scholar's flushing cheek and embarrassed manner.

"Yes, Sir, we have just settled in this neighborhood. I have a pretty cottage yonder at the outskirts of the village, and near the park-pales. I recognized you at once; and as I heard you just now, I called to mind that when we met before, you said your calling should be the Church, were it not for your difficulty in utterance; and I said to myself, 'No bad things those pebbles, if his utterance were thick, which it is not;' and I have not a doubt, Sir, that the true fault of Demosthenes, whom I presume you were imitating, was that he spoke through his nose."

"Eh!" said the scholar, "through his nose? I never knew that! — and I —"

"And you are trying to speak without lungs; that is, without air in them. You don't smoke, I presume?"

"No — certainly not."

"You must learn — speak between each slow puff of your pipe. All you want is time, time to quit the nerves, time to think, time to breathe. The moment you begin

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to stammer — stop — fill the lungs thus, then try again! It is only a clever man who can learn to write — that is, to compose; but any fool can be taught to speak.— Courage!"

"If you really can teach me," cried the learned man, forgetting all self-reproach for his betrayal of Waife to Mrs. Crane in the absorbing interest of the hope that sprang up within him — "If you can teach me — if I can but con — con — con — conq — "

"Slowly — slowly — breath and time; take a whiff from my pipe — that's right. Yes, you can conquer the impediment."

"Then I will be the best friend to you that man ever had. There's my hand on it."

"I take it, but I ask leave to change the parties in the contract. I don't want a friend — I don't deserve one. You'll be a friend to my little girl instead; and if ever I ask you to help me in aught for her welfare and happiness — "

"I will help, heart and soul. Slight, indeed, any service to her or to you compared with such service to me. Free this wretched tongue from its stammer, and thought and zeal will not stammer whenever you say, 'Keep your promise,' I am so glad your little girl is still with you!"

Waife looked surprised—"Is still with me—why not?"

The scholar bit his tongue. That was not the moment to confess; it might destroy all Waife's confidence in him. He would do so later.

"When shall I begin my lesson?"

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"Now, if you like. But have you a book in your pocket?"

"I always have."

"Not Greek, I hope, Sir."

"No, a volume of Barrow's Sermons. Lord Chatham recommended those sermons to his great son as a study for eloquence."

"Good! Will you lend me that volume, Sir, and now for it; listen to me: one sentence at a time — draw your breath when I do."

The three magpies pricked up their ears again, and, as they listened, marvelled much.

CHAPTER III.

Could we know by what strange circumstances a man's genius became prepared for practical success, we should discover that the most serviceable items in his education were never entered in the bills which his father paid for it.

At the end of the very first lesson George Morley saw, that all the elocution-masters to whose skill he had been consigned were blunderers in comparison to the basket-maker.

Waife did not puzzle him with scientific theories. All that the great comedian required of him was to observe and to imitate. Observation, imitation, lo! the ground-work of all art! the primal element of all genius! Not

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there, indeed, to halt, but there ever to commence. What remains to carry on the intellect to mastery? Two steps —to reflect, to reproduce. Observation, imitation, reflection, reproduction. In these stands a mind complete and consummate, fit to cope with all labor, achieve all success.

At the end of the first lesson George Morley felt that his cure was possible. Making an appointment for the next day at the same place, he came thither stealthily, and so on day by day. At the end of a week he felt that the cure was nearly sure; at the end of a month the cure was self-evident. He should live to preach the Word. True, that he practised incessantly in private. Not a moment in his waking hours that the one thought, one object, were absent from his mind; true, that with all his patience, all his toil, the obstacle was yet serious, might never be entirely overcome. Nervous hurry — rapidity of action — vehemence of feeling brought back, might, at unguarded moments, always bring back the gasping breath — the emptied lungs — the struggling utterance. But the relapse — rarer and rarer now with each trial — would be at last scarce a drawback. "Nay," quoth Waife, "instead of a drawback, become but an orator, and you will convert a defect into a beauty."

Thus justly sanguine of the accomplishment of his life's chosen object, the scholar's gratitude to Waife was unspeakable. And seeing the man daily at least in his own cottage — Sophy's health restored to her cheeks, smiles to her lip, and cheered at her light fancy-work beside her

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grándsire's elbow-chair, with fairy legends instilling perhaps golden truths — seeing Waife thus, the scholar mingled with gratitude a strange tenderness of respect. He knew naught of the vagrant's past — his reason might admit that in a position of life so at variance with the gifts natural and acquired of the singular basket-maker, there was something mysterious and suspicious. But he blushed to think that he had ever ascribed to a flawed or wandering intellect the eccentricities of glorious Humor — abetted an attempt to separate an old age so innocent and genial from a childhood so fostered and so fostering. And sure I am that if the whole world had risen up to point the finger of scorn at the one-eyed cripple, George Morley, the well-born gentleman — the refined scholar — the spotless Churchman — would have given him his arm to lean upon, and walked by his side unashamed.

CHAPTER IV.

To judge human character rightly, a man may sometimes have very small experience, provided he has a very large heart.

NUMA POMPILIUS did not more conceal from notice the lessons he received from Egeria than did George Morley those which he received from the basket-maker. Natural, indeed, must be his wish for secresy — pretty story it would be for Humberston, its future rector learning how to preach a sermon from an old basket-maker! But he

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had a nobler and more imperious motive for discretion—his honor was engaged to it. Waife exacted a promise that he would regard the intercourse between them as strictly private and confidential.

"It is for my sake I ask this," said Waife, frankly, "though I might say it was for yours." The Oxonian promised, and was bound. Fortunately, Lady Montfort quitting the Great House the very day after George had first encountered the basket-maker, and writing word that she should not return to it for some weeks — George was at liberty to avail himself of her lord's general invitation to make use of Montfort Court as his lodgings when in the neighborhood, which the proprieties of the world would not have allowed him to do while Lady Montfort was there without either host or female guests. Accordingly, he took up his abode in a corner of the vast palace, and was easily enabled, when he pleased, to traverse unobserved the solitudes of the park, gain the water-side, or stroll thence through the thick copse leading to Waife's cottage, which bordered the park-pales, solitary, sequestered, beyond sight of the neighboring village. The great house all to himself, George was brought in contact with no one to whom, in unguarded moments, he could even have let out a hint of his new acquaintance, except the clergyman of the parish, a worthy man, who lived in strict retirement upon a scanty stipend. For the Marquis was the lay impropriator; the living was therefore but a very poor vicarage, below the acceptance of a Vipont or a Vipont's tutor—sure to go to a quiet worthy

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man forced to live in strict retirement. George saw too little of this clergyman either to let out secrets or pick up information. From him, however, George did incidentally learn that Waife had some months previously visited the village, and proposed to the bailiff to take the cottage and osier land, which he now rented — that he represented himself as having known an old basket-maker who had dwelt there many years ago, and had learned the basket craft of that long deceased operative. As he offered a higher rent than the bailiff could elsewhere obtain, and as the bailiff was desirous to get credit with Mr. Carr Vipont for improving the property, by reviving thereon an art which had fallen into desuetude, the bargain was struck, provided the candidate, being a stranger to the place, could furnish the bailiff with any satisfactory reference. Waife had gone away, saying he should shortly return with the requisite testimonial. In fact, poor man, as we know, he was then counting on a good word from Mr. Hartopp. He had not, however, returned for some months. The cottage having been meanwhile wanted for the temporary occupation of an under gamekeeper, while his own was under repair, fortunately remained unlet. Waife, on returning, accompanied by his little girl, had referred the bailiff to a respectable house-agent and collector of street rents in Bloomsbury, who wrote word that a lady, then abroad, had authorized him, as the agent employed in the management of a house property from which much of her income was derived, not only to state that Waife was a very intelligent man

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likely to do well whatever he undertook, but also to guarantee, if required, the punctual payment of the rent for any holding of which he became the occupier. On this the agreement was concluded — the basket-maker installed. In the immediate neighborhood there was no custom for basket-work, but Waife's performances were so neat, and some so elegant and fanciful, that he had no difficulty in contracting with a large tradesman (not at Humberston, but a more distant and yet more thriving town about twenty miles off), for as much of such work as he could supply. Each week the carrier took his goods and brought back the payments; the profits amply sufficed for Waife's and Sophy's daily bread, with even more than the surplus set aside for the rent. For the rest, the basket-maker's cottage being at the farthest outskirts of the straggling village inhabited but by a laboring peasantry, his way of life was not much known, nor much inquired into. He seemed a harmless hard-working man — never seen at the beer-house, always seen with his neatly-dressed little grandchild in his quiet corner at church on Sundays — a civil, well-behaved man who touched his hat to the bailiff, and took it off to the vicar.

An idea prevailed that the basket-maker had spent much of his life in foreign parts, favored partly by a sobriety of habits which is not altogether national, partly by something in his appearance, which, without being above his lowly calling, did not seem quite in keeping with it — outlandish in short — but principally by the

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fact that he had received since his arrival two letters with a foreign postmark. The idea befriended the old man; allowing it to be inferred that he had probably outlived the friends he had formerly left behind him in England, and on his return, been sufficiently fatigued with his rambles to drop contented in any corner of his native soil, wherein he could find a quiet home, and earn by light toil a decent livelihood.

George, though naturally curious to know what had been the result of his communication to Mrs. Crane — whether it had led to Waife's discovery or caused him annoyance, had hitherto, however, shrunk from touching upon a topic which subjected himself to an awkward confession of officious intermeddling, and might appear an indirect and indelicate mode of prying into painful family affairs. But one day he received a letter from his father which disturbed him greatly, and induced him to break ground and speak to his preceptor frankly. In this letter the elder Mr. Morley mentioned incidentally, among other scraps of local news, that he had seen Mr. Hartopp, who was rather out of sorts, his good heart not having recovered the shock of having been abominably "taken in" by an impostor for whom he had conceived a great fancy, and to whose discovery George himself had providentially led (the father referring here to what George had told him of his first meeting with Waife, and his visit to Mrs. Crane), the impostor, it seemed, from what Mr. Hartopp let fall, not being a little queer in the head — as George had been led to surmise—but a very bad character. "In

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fact," added the elder Morley, "a character so bad, that Mr. Hartopp was too glad to give up the child, whom the man appears to have abducted, to her lawful protectors; and I suspect from what Hartopp said, though he does not like to own that he was taken in to so gross a degree, that he had been actually introducing to his fellow-townsfolk, and conferring familiarly, with a regular jail-bird—perhaps a burglar. How lucky for that poor, soft-headed, excellent Jos Hartopp — whom it is positively as inhuman to take in as if he were a born natural — that the lady you saw arrived in time to expose the snares laid for his benevolent credulity. But for that, Jos might have taken the fellow into his own house — (just like him!)—and been robbed by this time—perhaps murdered — Heaven knows!"

Incredulous and indignant, and longing to be empowered to vindicate his friend's fair name, George seized his hat, and strode quick along the path toward the basket-maker's cottage. As he gained the water-side he perceived Waife himself, seated on a mossy bank, under a gnarled fantastic thorn-tree, watching a deer as it came to drink, and whistling a soft mellow tune — the tune of an old English border-song. The deer lifted its antlers from the water, and turned its large bright eyes toward the opposite bank, whence the note came — listening and wistful. As George's step crushed the wild thyme, which the thorn-tree shadowed — "Hush," said Waife, "and mark how the rudest musical sound can affect the brute creation." He resumed the whistle — a clearer, louder;

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wilder tune — that of a lively hunting-song. The deer turned quickly round—uneasy, restless, tossed its antlers, and bounded through the fern. Waife again changed the key of his primitive music — a melancholy *belling* note, like the belling itself of a melancholy hart, but more modulated into sweetness. The deer arrested its flight, and, lured by the mimic sound, returned toward the water-side, slow and stately.

"I don't think the story of Orpheus charming the brutes was a fable — do you, Sir?" said Waife. "The rabbits about here know me already; and if I had but a fiddle I would undertake to make friends with that reserved and unsocial water-rat, on whom Sir Isaac in vain endeavors at present to force his acquaintance. Man commits a great mistake in not cultivating more intimate and amicable relations with the other branches of earth's great family. Few of them not more amusing than we are — naturally, for they have not our cares. And such variety of character, too, where you would least expect it!"

GEORGE MORLEY. "Very true: Cowper noticed marked differences of character in his favorite hares."

WAIFE. "Hares! I am sure that there are not two house-flies on a window-pane, two minnows in that water, that would not present to us interesting points of contrast as to temper and disposition. If house-flies and minnows could but coin money, or set up a manufacture — contrive something, in short, to buy or sell attractive to Anglo-Saxon enterprise and intelligence — of course

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we should soon have diplomatic relations with them; and our dispatches and newspapers would instruct us to a T in the characters and propensities of their leading personages. But where man has no pecuniary nor ambitious interests at stake in his commerce with any class of his fellow-creatures, his information about them is extremely confused and superficial. The best naturalists are mere generalizers, and think they have done a vast deal when they classify a species. What should we know about mankind if we had only a naturalist's definition of man? We only know mankind by knocking classification on the head, and studying each man as a class in himself. Compare Buffon with Shakspeare! Alas! Sir—can we never have a Shakspeare for house-flies and minnows?"

GEORGE MORLEY. "With all respect for minnows and house-flies, if we found another Shakspeare, he might be better employed, like his predecessor, in selecting individualities from the classifications of man."

WAIFE. "Being yourself a man, you think so—a house-fly might be of a different opinion. But permit me, at least, to doubt whether such an investigator would be better employed in reference to his own happiness, though I grant that he would be so in reference to your intellectual amusement and social interests. Poor Shakspeare! How much he must have suffered!"

GEORGE MORLEY. "You mean that he must have been racked by the passions he describes—bruised by collision with the hearts he dissects. That is not necessary to genius. The judge on his bench, summing up evidence,

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and charging the jury, has no need to have shared the temptations, or been privy to the acts, of the prisoner at the bar. Yet how consummate may be his analysis!"

"No," cried Waife, roughly. "No. Your illustration destroys your argument. The judge knows nothing of the prisoner! There are the circumstances — there is the law. By these he generalizes—by these he judges—right or wrong. But of the individual at the bar—of the world — the tremendous world within that individual heart—I repeat—he knows nothing. Did he know, law and circumstance might vanish — human justice would be paralyzed. Ho, there! place that swart-visaged, ill-looking foreigner in the dock, and let counsel open the case—hear the witnesses depose! Oh, horrible wretch! — a murderer — unmanly murderer! — a defenseless woman smothered by caitiff hands! Hang him up — hang him up! 'Softly,' whispers the POET, and lifts the vail from the Assassin's heart. 'Lo! it is Othello the Moor! What jury now dare find that criminal guilty? — what judge now will put on the black cap? — who now says, 'Hang him up — hang him up?"

With such lifelike force did the Comedian vent this passionate outburst that he thrilled his listener with an awe akin to that which the convicted Moor gathers round himself at the close of the sublime drama. Even Sir Isaac was startled; and, leaving his hopeless pursuit of the water-rat, uttered a low bark, came to his master, and looked into his face with solemn curiosity.

WAIFE (relapsing into colloquial accents). "Why do

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we sympathize with those above us more than with those below? why with the sorrows of a king rather than those of a beggar? why does Sir Isaac sympathize with me more than (let that water-rat vex him ever so much) I can possibly sympathize with him? Whatever be the cause, see at least, Mr. Morley, one reason why a poor creature like myself finds it better employment to cultivate the intimacy of brutes than to prosecute the study of men. Among men, all are too high to sympathize with me; but I have known two friends who never injured nor betrayed me. Sir Isaac is one, Wamba was another. Wamba, Sir, the native of a remote district of the globe (two friends civilized Europe is not large enough to afford to any one man).—Wamba, Sir, was less gifted by nature, less refined by education than Sir Isaac; but he was a safe and trustworthy companion. Wamba, Sir, was — an opossum."

GEORGE MORLEY. "Alas, my dear Mr. Waife, I fear that men must have behaved very ill to you."

WAIFE. "I have no right to complain. I have behaved very ill to myself. When a man is his own enemy, he is very unreasonable if he expect other men to be his benefactors."

GEORGE MORLEY (with emotion). "Listen, I have a confession to make to you. I fear I have done you an injury — where, officiously, I meant to do a kindness." The scholar hurried on to narrate the particulars of his visit to Mrs. Crane. On concluding the recital, he added — "When again I met you here, and learned that your Sophy was with you, I felt inexpressibly relieved. It was

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clear then, I thought, that your grandchild had been left to your care unmolested, either that you had proved not to be the person of whom the parties were in search, or family affairs had been so explained and reconciled, that my interference had occasioned you no harm. But to-day I have a letter from my father which disquiets me much. It seems that the persons in question did visit Gatesboro' and have maligned you to Mr. Hartopp. Understand me, I ask for no confidence which you may be unwilling to give; but if you will arm me with the power to vindicate your character from aspersions which I need not your assurance to hold unjust and false, I will not rest till that task be triumphantly accomplished."

WAIFE (in a tone calm but dejected). "I thank you with all my heart. But there is nothing to be done. I am glad that the subject did not start up between us until such little service as I could render you, Mr. Morley, was pretty well over. It would have been a pity if you had been compelled to drop all communication with a man of attainted character before you had learned how to manage the powers that will enable you hereafter to exhort sinners worse than I have been. Hush, Sir! you feel that, at least now, I am an inoffensive old man — laboring for a humble livelihood. "You will not repeat here what you may have heard, or yet hear, to the discredit of my former life? You will not send me and my grandchild forth from our obscure refuge to confront a world with which we have no strength to cope? And, believing this, it only remains for me to say fare-you-well, Sir."

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"I should deserve to lose spe—spe—speech altogether," cried the Oxonian, gasping and stammering fearfully as he caught Waife firmly by the arm, "if I suffered — suff — suff — suff —"

"One, two! take time, Sir!" said the Comedian, softly. And with a sweet patience he reseated himself on the bank.

The Oxonian threw himself at length by the outcast's side; and with the noble tenderness of a nature as chivalrously Christian as Heaven ever gave to priest, he rested his folded hands upon Waife's shoulder, and looking him full and close in the face, said thus, slowly, deliberately, not a stammer:

"You do not guess what you have done for me; you have secured to me a home and a career — the wife of whom I must otherwise have despaired — the divine vocation on which all my earthly hopes were set, and which I was on the eve of renouncing — do not think these are obligations which can be lightly shaken off. If there are circumstances which forbid me to disabuse others of impressions which wrong you, imagine not that their false notions will affect my own gratitude—my own respect for you!"

"Nay, Sir! they ought — they must. Perhaps not your exaggerated gratitude for a service which you should not, however, measure by its effects on yourself, but by the slightness of the trouble it gave to me; not perhaps your gratitude — but your respect, yes."

"I tell you no! Do you fancy that I cannot judge of

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a man's nature without calling on him to trust me with all the secrets — all the errors, if you will, of his past life? Will not the calling to which I may now hold myself destined give me power and commandment to absolve all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe? Oh, Mr. Waife! if in earlier days you have sinned, do you not repent? and how often, in many a lovely gentle sentence dropped unawares from your lips, have I had cause to know that you unfeignedly believe! Were I now clothed with sacred authority, could I not absolve you as a priest? Think you that, in the meanwhile, I dare judge you as a man? I—life's new recruit, guarded hitherto from temptation by careful parents and favoring fortune — *I* presume to judge, and judge harshly, the gray-haired veteran, wearied by the march, wounded in the battle!"

"You are a noble-hearted human being," said Waife, greatly affected. "And — mark my words — a mantle of charity so large you will live to wear as a robe of honor. But hear me, Sir! Mr. Hartopp also is a man infinitely charitable, benevolent, kindly, and, through all his simplicity, acutely shrewd. Mr. Hartopp, on hearing what was said against me, deemed me unfit to retain my grandchild, resigned the trust I had confided to him, and would have given me alms, no doubt, had I asked them, but not his hand. Take your hands, Sir, from my shoulder, lest the touch sully you."

George did take his hands from the vagrant's shoulder, but it was to grasp the hand that waived them off, and struggled to escape the pressure. "You are innocent,

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you are innocent! forgive me that I spoke to you of repentance, as if you had been guilty. I feel you are innocent — feel it by my own heart. You turn away. I defy you to say that you are guilty of what has been laid to your charge, of what has darkened your good name, of what Mr. Hartopp believed to your prejudice. Look me in the face and say, 'I am not innocent, I have not been belied.'"

Waife remained voiceless — motionless.

The young man, in whose nature lay yet unproved all those grand qualities of heart, without which never was there a grand orator, a grand preacher — qualities which grasp the results of argument, and arrive at the end of elaborate reasoning by sudden impulse — here released Waife's hand, rose to his feet, and, facing Waife, as the old man sate with face averted, eyes downcast, breast heaving, said, loftily,

"Forget that I may soon be the Christian minister whose duty bows his ear to the lips of shame and guilt — whose hand, when it points to Heaven, no mortal touch can sully — whose sublimest post is by the sinner's side. Look on me but as man and gentleman. See, I now extend this hand to you. If, as man and gentleman, you have done that which, could all hearts be read, all secrets known—human judgment reversed by Divine omniscience — forbids you to take this hand — *then* reject it — go hence — we part! But if no such act be on your conscience — however you submit to its imputation — THEN, in the name of Truth, as man and gentleman to man and

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gentleman, I command you to take this right hand, and in the name of that Honor which bears no paltering, I forbid you to disobey."

The vagabond rose, like the dead at the spell of a magician — took, as if irresistibly, the hand held out to him. And the scholar, overjoyed, fell on his breast, embracing him as a son.

"You know," said George, in trembling accents, "that the hand you have taken will never betray — never desert; but is it — is it really powerless to raise and to restore you to your place?"

"Powerless among your kind for that indeed," answered Waife, in accents still more tremulous. "All the kings of the earth are not strong enough to raise a name that has once been trampled into the mire. Learn that it is not only impossible for me to clear myself, but that it is equally impossible for me to confide to mortal being a single plea in defence if I am innocent, in extenuation if I am guilty. And saying this, and entreating you to hold it more merciful to condemn than to question me — for question is torture — I can not reject your pity; but it would be mockery to offer me respect!"

"What! not respect the fortitude which calumny can not crush? Would that fortitude be possible if you were not calm in the knowledge that no false witnesses can mislead the Eternal Judge? Respect you! yes — because I have seen you happy in despite of men, and therefore I know that the cloud around you is not the frown of Heaven."

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"Oh," cried Waife, the tears rolling down his cheeks, "and not an hour ago I was jesting at human friendship — venting graceless spleen on my fellow-men! And now — now — ah! Sir, Providence is so kind to me! And," said he, brushing away his tears, as the old arch smile began to play round the corner of his mouth — "and kind to me in the very quarter in which unkindness had most sorely smitten me. True, you directed toward me the woman who took from me my grandchild — who destroyed me in the esteem of good Mr. Hartopp. Well, you see, I have my sweet Sophy back again; we are in the home of all others I most longed for; and that woman — yes, I can, at least thus far, confide to you my secrets, so that you may not blame yourself for sending her to Gatesboro' — that very woman knows of my shelter — furnished me with the very reference necessary to obtain it; has freed my grandchild from a loathsome bondage, which I could not have legally resisted; and should new persecutions chase us, will watch, and warn, and help us. And if you ask me how this change in her was effected — how, when we had abandoned all hope of green fields, and deemed that only in the crowd of a city we could escape those who pursued us when discovered there, though I fancied myself an adept in disguise, and the child and the dog were never seen out of the four garret walls in which I hid them; if you ask me, I say, to explain how that very woman was suddenly converted from a remorseless foe into a saving guardian, I can only answer, by no wit, no device, no persuasive art of mine. Providence softened her

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heart, and made it kind, just at the moment when no other agency on earth could have rescued us from — from — "

"Say no more—I guess! the paper this woman showed me was a legal form authorizing your poor little Sophy to be given up to the care of a father. I guess! of that father you would not speak ill to me; yet from that father you would save your grandchild. Say no more. And yon quiet home — your humble employment, really content you?"

"Oh, if such a life can but last! Sophy is so well, so cheerful, so happy. Did not you hear her singing the other day? She never used to sing! But we had not been here a week when song broke out from her untaught, as from a bird. But if any ill report of me travel hither from Gatesboro', or elsewhere, we should be sent away, and the bird would be mute in my thorn-tree — Sophy would sing no more."

"Do not fear that slander shall drive you hence. Lady Montfort, you know, is my cousin, but you know not — few do — how thoroughly generous and gentle-hearted she is. I will speak of you to her. — Oh, do not look alarmed. She will take my word when I tell her 'that is a good man;' and if she ask more, it will be enough to say, 'those who have known better days are loth to speak to strangers of the past.'"

"I thank you earnestly, sincerely," said Waife, brightening up. "One favor more — if you saw in the formal document shown to you, or retain on your memory, the name of — of the person authorized to claim Sophy

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as his child, you will not mention it to Lady Montfort. I am not sure if ever she heard that name, but she may have done so—and—and—" He paused a moment, and seemed to muse; then went on, not concluding his sentence. "You are so good to me, Mr. Morley, that I wish to confide in you as far as I can. Now, you see I am already an old man, and my chief object is to raise up a friend for Sophy when I am gone — a friend in her own sex, Sir. Oh, you can not guess how I long — how I yearn to view that child under the holy fostering eyes of woman. Perhaps if Lady Montfort saw my pretty Sophy she might take a fancy to her. Oh, if she did — if she did! And Sophy," added Waife, proudly, "*has* a right to respect. She is not like me — any hovel good enough for me. But for her!—Do you know that I conceived that hope—that the hope helped to lead me back here when, months ago, I was at Humberston, intent upon rescuing Sophy; and saw, though," observed Waife, with a sly twitch of the muscles round his mouth, "I had no right at that precise moment to be seeing any thing—Lady Montfort's humane fear for a blind old impostor, who was trying to save his dog — a black dog, Sir, who had dyed his hair — from her carriage wheels. And the hope became stronger still, when, the first Sunday I attended yon village church, I again saw that fair—wondrously fair—face at the far end—fair as moonlight and as melancholy. Strange it is, Sir, that I, naturally a boisterous, mirthful man, and now a shy, skulking fugitive — feel more attracted, more allured

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toward a countenance, in proportion as I read there the trace of sadness. I feel less abashed by my own nothingness — more emboldened to approach and say, 'Not so far apart from me; thou, too, hast suffered.' Why is this?"

GEORGE MORLEY. "'The fool hath said in his heart that there is no God;' but the fool hath not said in his heart that there is no sorrow — pithy and most profound sentence; intimating the irrefragable chain that binds men to the Father. And where the chain tightens the children are closer drawn together. But to your wish— I will remember it. And when my cousin returns she shall see your Sophy."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Waife, being by nature unlucky, considers that, in proportion as Fortune brings him good luck, Nature converts it into bad. He suffers Mr. George Morley to go away in his debt, and Sophy fears that he will be dull in consequence.

GEORGE MORLEY, a few weeks after the conversation last recorded, took his departure from Montfort Court, prepared, without a scruple, to present himself for ordination to the friendly bishop. From Waife he derived more than the cure of a disabling infirmity; he received those hints which, to a man who has the natural temperament of an orator, so rarely united with that of the

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scholar, expedite the mastery of the art which makes the fleeting human voice an abiding, imperishable power. The grateful teacher exhausted all his lore upon the pupil whose genius he had freed — whose heart had subdued himself. Before leaving, George was much perplexed how to offer to Waife any other remuneration than that which, in Waife's estimate, had already overpaid all the benefits he had received — viz., unquestioning friendship and pledged protection. It need scarcely be said that George thought the man to whom he owed fortune and happiness was entitled to something beyond that moral recompense. But he found, at the first delicate hint, that Waife would not hear of money, though the ex-Comedian did not affect any very Quixotic notions on that practical subject. "To tell you the truth, Sir, I have rather a superstition against having more money in my hands than I know what to do with. It has always brought me bad luck. And what is very hard—the bad luck stays, but the money goes. There was that splendid sum I made at Gainsboro'. You should have seen me counting it over. I could not have had a prouder or more swelling heart if I had been that great man Mr. Elwes the miser. And what bad luck it brought me, and how it all frittered itself away! Nothing to show for it but a silk ladder and an old hurdy-gurdy, and I sold *them* at half-price. Then, when I had the accident which cost me this eye, the railway people behaved so generously, gave me £120 — think of that! And before three days the money was all gone!"

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"How was that?" said George, half amused, half pained; "stolen, perhaps?"

"Not so," answered Waife, somewhat gloomily, "but restored. A poor dear old man, who thought very ill of me — and I don't wonder at it — was reduced from great wealth to great poverty. While I was laid up my landlady read a newspaper to me, and in that newspaper was an account of his reverse and destitution. But I was accountable to him for the balance of an old debt, and that, with the doctor's bills, quite covered my £120. I hope he does not think quite so ill of me now. But the money brought good luck to him rather than to me. Well, Sir, if you were now to give me money I should be on the look-out for some mournful calamity. Gold is not natural to me. Some day, however, by-and-by, when you are inducted into your living, and have become a renowned preacher, and have plenty to spare, with an idea that you would feel more comfortable in your mind if you had done something royal for the basket-maker, I will ask you to help me to make up a sum which I am trying by degrees to save — an enormous sum — as much as I paid away from my railway compensation — I owe it to the lady who lent it to release Sophy from an engagement which I — certainly without any remorse of conscience — made the child break."

"Oh yes! What is the amount? Let me at least repay that debt."

"Not yet. The lady can wait — and she would be pleased to wait, because she deserves to wait — it would be unkind to her to pay it off at once. But in the mean

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while, if you could send me a few good books for Sophy? — instructive; yet not very, very dry. And a French dictionary—I can teach her French when the winter days close in. You see I am not above being paid, Sir. But, Mr. Morley, there is a great favor you can do me."

"What is it? Speak."

"Cautiously refrain from doing me a great disservice! You are going back to your friends and relations. Never speak of me to them. Never describe me and my odd ways. Name not the lady, nor — nor — nor — the man who claimed Sophy. Your friends might not hurt me, others might. Talk travels. The Hare is not long in its form when it has a friend in a Hound that gives tongue. Promise what I ask. Promise it as 'man and gentleman."

"Certainly. Yet I have one relation to whom I should like, with your permission, to speak of you — with whom I could wish you acquainted. He is so thorough a man of the world that he might suggest some method to clear your good name, which you yourself would approve. My uncle, Colonel Morley —"

"On no account!" cried Waife, almost fiercely, and he evinced so much anger and uneasiness that it was long before George could pacify him by the most earnest assurances that his secret should be inviolably kept, and his injunctions faithfully obeyed. No men of the world consulted how to force him back to the world of men that he fled from! No colonels to scan him with martinet eyes, and hint how to pipe-clay a tarnish! Waife's apprehensions gradually allayed, and his confidence restored, one

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fine morning George took leave of his eccentric benefactor.

Waife and Sophy stood gazing after him from their garden-gate; the cripple leaning lightly on the child's arm. She looked with anxious fondness into the old man's thoughtful face, and clung to him more closely as she looked.

"Will you not be dull, poor grandy? Will you not miss him?"

"A little at first," said Waife, rousing himself. "Education is a great thing. An educated mind, provided that it does us no mischief — which is not always the case — cannot be withdrawn from our existence without leaving a blank behind. Sophy, we must seriously set to work and educate ourselves!"

"We will, grandy dear," said Sophy, with decision; and a few minutes afterward, "If I can become very, very clever, you will not pine so much after that gentleman — will you, grandy?"

CHAPTER VI.

Being a chapter that comes to an untimely end.

WINTER was far advanced when Montfort Court was again brightened by the presence of its lady. A polite letter from Mr. Carr Vipont had reached her before leaving Windsor, suggesting how much it would be for

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the advantage of the Vipont interest if she would consent to visit for a month or two the seat in Ireland, which had been too long neglected, and at which my lord would join her on his departure from his Highland moors. So to Ireland went Lady Montfort. My lord did not join her there; but Mr. Carr Vipont deemed it desirable for the Vipont interest that the wedded pair should reunite at Montfort Court, where all the Vipont family were invited to witness their felicity or mitigate their *ennui*.

But, before proceeding another stage in this history, it becomes a just tribute of respect to the great House of Vipont to pause and place its past records and present grandeur in fuller display before the reverential reader. The House of Vipont! What am I about? The House of Vipont requires a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOUSE OF VIPONT. — "*Majora canamus.*"

THE House of Vipont! Looking back through ages, it seems as if the House of Vipont were one continuous, living idiosyncrasy, having in its progressive development a connected unity of thought and action, so that through all the changes of its outward form it had been moved and guided by the same single spirit — "*Le roi est mort — vive le roi!*" — A Vipont dies — live the Vi-

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pont! Despite its high-sounding Norman name, the House of Vipont was no House at all for some generations after the Conquest. The first Vipont who emerged from the obscurity of time was a rude soldier, of Gascon origin, in the reign of Henry II.; one of the thousand fighting men who sailed from Milford Haven with the stout Earl of Pembroke, on that strange expedition which ended in the conquest of Ireland. This gallant man obtained large grants of land in that fertile island — some Mac or some O' vanished, and the House of Vipont rose.

During the reign of Richard I. the House of Vipont, though recalled to England (leaving its Irish acquisitions in charge of a fierce cadet, who served as middleman), excused itself from the Crusade, and, by marriage with a rich goldsmith's daughter, was enabled to lend moneys to those who indulged in that exciting but costly pilgrimage. In the reign of John the House of Vipont foreclosed its mortgages on lands thus pledged, and became possessed of a very fair property in England, as well as its fiefs in the sister isle.

The House of Vipont took no part in the troublesome politics of that day. Discreetly obscure, it attended to its own fortunes, and felt small interest in *Magna Charta*. During the reigns of the Plantagenet Edwards, who were great encouragers of mercantile adventure, the House of Vipont, shunning Creci, Bannockburn, and such profitless brawls, intermarried with London traders, and got many a good thing out of the Genoese. In the reign of Henry IV. the House of Vipont reaped the benefit of its past

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forbearance and modesty. Now, for the first time, the Vipouts appear as belted knights — they have armorial bearings — they are Lancasterian to the back-bone — they are exceedingly indignant against heretics — they burn the Lollards — they have places in the household of Queen Joan, who was called a witch, but a witch is a very good friend when she wields a sceptre instead of a broomstick. And in proof of its growing importance, the House of Vipont marries a daughter of the then mighty House of Darrell. In the reign of Henry V., during the invasion of France, the House of Vipont — being afraid of the dysentery which carried off more brave fellows than the field of Agincourt — contrived to be a minor. The Wars of the Roses puzzled the House of Vipont sadly. But it went through that perilous ordeal with singular tact and success. The manner in which it changed sides, each change safe, and most changes lucrative, is beyond all praise.

On the whole, it preferred the Yorkists; it was impossible to be actively Lancasterian, with Henry VI. of Lancaster always in prison. And thus, at the death of Edward IV., the House of Vipont was Baron Vipont of Vipont, with twenty manors. Richard III. counted on the House of Vipont, when he left London to meet Richmond at Bosworth — he counted without his host. The House of Vipont became again intensely Lancasterian, and was among the first to crowd round the litter in which Henry VII. entered the metropolis. In that reign it married a relation of Empson's — did the great House of

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Vipont! and as nobles of elder date had become scarce and poor, Henry VII. was pleassd to make the House of Vipont an earl — the Earl of Montfort. In the reign of Henry VIII., instead of burning Lollards, the House of Vipont was all for the Reformation — it obtained the lands of two priories and one abbey. Gorged with that spoil, the House of Vipont, like an anaconda in the process of digestion, slept long. But no, it slept not. Though it kept itself still as a mouse during the reign of bloody Queen Mary (only letting it be known at court that the House of Vipont had strong papal leanings); though during the reigns of Elizabeth and James it made no noise, the House of Vipont was silently inflating its lungs, and improving its constitution. Slept, indeed! it was wide awake. Then it was that it began systematically its grand policy of alliances; then was it sedulously grafting its olive branches on the stems of those fruitful New Houses that had sprung up with the Tudors; then, alive to the spirit of the day, provident of the wants of the morrow, over the length and breadth of the land it wove the interlacing net-work of useful cousinhood! Then, too, it began to build palaces, to inclose parks — it traveled, too, a little — did the House of Vipont! It visited Italy — it conceived a taste; a very elegant House became the House of Vipont! And in James's reign, for the first time, the House of Vipont got the Garter. The Civil Wars broke out — England was rent. Peer and knight took part with one side or the other. The House of Vipont was again perplexed. Certainly at the commencement it was all for

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King Charles. But when King Charles took to fighting, the House of Vipont shook its sagacious head, and went about, like Lord Falkland, sighing "Peace, peace!" Finally it remembered its neglected estates in Ireland — its duties called it thither. To Ireland it went, discreetly sad, and, marrying a kinswoman of Lord Fauconberg — the only popular and safe connection formed by the Lord Protector's family — it was safe when Cromwell visited Ireland; and no less safe when Charles II. was restored to England. During the reign of the merry monarch the House of Vipont was a courtier, married a beauty, got the Garter again, and, for the first time, became the fashion. Fashion began to be a power. In the reign of James II. the House of Vipont again contrived to be a minor, who came of age just in time to take the oaths of fealty to William and Mary. In case of accidents, the House of Vipont kept on friendly terms with the exiled Stuarts, but it wrote no letters, and got into no scrapes. It was not, however, till the Government, under Sir R. Walpole, established the constitutional and parliamentary system which characterizes modern freedom, that the puissance accumulated through successive centuries by the House of Vipont became pre-eminently visible. By that time its lands were vast, its wealth enormous; its parliamentary influence, as "a Great House," was now a part of the British Constitution. At this period the House of Vipont found it convenient to rend itself into two grand divisions — the peer's branch and the commoner's. The House of Commons had become so important that it was

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necessary for the House of Vipont to be represented there by a great commoner. Thus arose the family of Carr Vipont. That division — owing to a marriage settlement favoring a younger son by the heiress of the Carrs — carried off a good slice from the estate of the earldom — *uno averso, non deficit alter;* the earldom mourned, but replaced the loss by two wealthy wedlocks of its own; and had since seen cause to rejoice that its power in the Upper Chamber was strengthened by such aid in the Lower. For, thanks to its parliamentary influence, and the aid of the great commoner, in the reign of George III. the House of Vipont became a Marquis. From that time to the present day the House of Vipont had gone on prospering and progressive. It was to the aristocracy what the *Times* newspaper is to the press. The same quick sympathy with public feeling — the same unity of tone and purpose — the same adaptability — and something of the same lofty tone of superiority to the petty interests of party. It may be conceded that the House of Vipont was less brilliant than the *Times* newspaper, but eloquence and wit, necessary to the duration of a newspaper, were not necessary to that of the house of Vipont. Had they been so, it would have had them!

The Head of the House of Vipont rarely condescended to take office. With a rent-roll loosely estimated at about £170,000 a year, it is beneath a man to take from the public a paltry five or six thousand a year, and undergo all the undignified abuse of popular assemblies, and "a ribald press." But it was a matter of course that the

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House of Vipont should be represented in any cabinet that a constitutional monarch could be advised to form. Since the time of Walpole, a Vipont was always in the service of his country, except in those rare instances when the country was infamously misgoverned. The cadets of the House, or the senior member of the great commoner's branch of it, sacrificed their ease to fulfill that duty. The Montfort marquises in general were contented with situations of honor in the household, as of Lord Steward, Lord Chamberlain, or Master of the Horse, etc. — not onerous dignities; and even these they only deigned to accept on those especial occasions when danger threatened the Star of Brunswick, and the sense of its exalted station forbade the house of Vipont to leave his country in the dark.

Great Houses like that of Vipont assist the work of civilization by the law of their existence. They are sure to have a spirited and wealthy tenantry, to whom, if but for the sake of that popular character which doubles political influence, they are liberal and kindly landlords. Under their sway fens and sands become fertile — agricultural experiments are tested on a large scale — cattle and sheep improve in breed — national capital augments, and, springing beneath the plowshare, circulates indirectly to speed the ship and animate the loom. Had there been no Woburn, no Holkham, no Montfort Court, England would be the poorer by many a million. Our great Houses tend also to the refinement of national taste; they have their show-places, their picture-galleries, their beautiful grounds. The humblest drawing-rooms owe an

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elegance or comfort — the smallest garden, a flower or esculent — to the importations which luxury borrowed from abroad, or the inventions it stimulated at home, for the original benefit of great Houses. Having a fair share of such merits, in common with other great Houses, the House of Vipont was not without good qualities peculiar to itself. Precisely because it was the most egotistical of Houses, filled with the sense of its own identity, and guided by the instincts of its own conservation, it was a very civil, good-natured House — courteous, generous, hospitable; a House (I mean the Head of it — not, of course, all its subordinate members, including even the august Lady Selina) that could bow graciously, and shake hands with you. Even if you had no vote yourself, you might have a cousin who had a vote. And once admitted into the family, the House adopted you; you had only to marry one of its remotest relations, and the House sent you a wedding present; and at every general election invited you to rally round your connection — the Marquis. Therefore, next only to the Established Church, the House of Vipont was that British institution, the roots of which were the most widely spread.

Now the Viponts had for long generations been an energetic race. Whatever their defects, they had exhibited shrewdness and vigor. The late Marquis (grandfather to the present) had been, perhaps, the ablest (that is, done most for the House of Vipont) of them all. Of a grandiose and superb mode of living — of a majestic deportment—of princely manners—of a remarkakle talent

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for the management of all business, whether private or public — a perfect enthusiast for the House of Vipont, and aided by a marchioness in all respects worthy of him, he might be said to be the culminating flower of the venerable stem. But the present lord, succeeding to the title as a mere child, was a melancholy contrast, not only to his grandsire, but to the general character of his progenitors. Before his time every head of the House had done something for it — even the most frivolous had contributed; one had collected the pictures, another the statues, a third the medals, a fourth had amassed the famous Vipont library; while others had at least married heiresses, or augmented, through ducal lines, the splendor of the interminable cousinhood. The present marquis was literally *nil*. The pith of the Viponts was not in him. He looked well, he dressed well; if life were only the dumb show of a tableau, he would have been a paragon of a Marquis. But he was like the watches we give to little children, with a pretty gilt dial-plate, and no works in them. He was thoroughly inert — there was no winding him up; he could not manage his property — he could not answer his letters — very few of them could he even read through. Politics did not interest him, nor literature, nor field-sports. He shot, it is true, but mechanically — wondering, perhaps, why he did shoot. He attended races, because the House of Vipont kept a racing stud. He bet on his own horses; but if they lost, showed no vexation. Admirers (no Marquis of Montfort could be wholly without them) said: "What fine temper! what good-breeding!"

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it was nothing but constitutional apathy. No one could call him a bad man—he was not a profligate, an oppressor, a miser, a spendthrift; he would not have taken the trouble to be a bad man on any account. Those who beheld his character at a distance would have called him an exemplary man. The more conspicuous duties of his station, subscriptions, charities, the maintenance of grand establishments, the encouragement of the fine arts, were virtues admirably performed for him by others. But the phlegm or nullity of his being was not, after all, so complete as I have made it, perhaps, appear. He had one susceptibility which is more common with women than with men—the susceptibility to *pique*. His *amour propre* was unforgiving — pique that, and he could do a rash thing, a foolish thing, a spiteful thing — pique that, and, prodigious! the watch went! He had a rooted pique against his marchioness. Apparently he had conceived this pique from the very first. He showed it passively by supreme neglect; he showed it actively by removing her from all the spheres of power which naturally fall to the wife when the husband shuns the details of business. Evidently he had a dread lest any one should say, "Lady Montfort influences my lord." Accordingly, not only the management of his estates fell to Carr Vipont, but even of his gardens, his household, his domestic arrangements. It was Carr Vipont or Lady Selina who said to Lady Montfort, "Give a ball;" "You should ask so and so to dinner." Montfort was much hurt to see the old lawn at the Twickenham Villa broken up by those new *bosquets*.

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True, it is settled on you as a jointure house, but for that very reason Montfort is sensitive," etc. etc. In fact, they were virtually as separated, my lord and my lady, as if legally disunited, and as if Carr Vipont and Lady Selina were trustees or intermediaries in any polite approach to each other. But, on the other hand, it is fair to say that where Lady Montfort's sphere of action did not interfere with her husband's plans, habits, likings, dislikings, jealous apprehensions, that she should be supposed to have any ascendency over what exclusively belonged to himself as *Roi faineant* of the Vipont's, she was left free as air. No attempt at masculine control or conjugal advice. At her disposal was wealth without stint — every luxury the soft could desire — every gewgaw the vain could covet. Had her pin-money, which was in itself the revenue of an ordinary peeress, failed to satisfy her wants — had she grown tired of wearing the family diamonds, and coveted new gems from Golconda — a single word to Carr Vipont or Lady Selina would have been answered by a *carte blanche* on the Bank of England. But Lady Montfort had the misfortune not to be extravagant in her tastes. Strange to say, in the world Lord Montfort's marriage was called a love match; he had married a portionless girl, daughter to one of his poorest and obscurest cousins, against the uniform policy of the House of Vipont, which did all it could for poor cousins except marrying them to its chief. But Lady Montfort's conduct in these trying circumstances was admirable and rare. Few affronts can humiliate us unless we resent them — and in vain. Lady

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Montfort had that exquisite dignity which gives to submission the grace of cheerful acquiescence. That in the gay world flatterers should gather round a young wife so eminently beautiful, and so wholly left by her husband to her own guidance, was inevitable. But at the very first insinuated compliment or pathetic condolence, Lady Montfort, so meek in her household, was haughty enough to have daunted Lovelace. She was thus very early felt to be beyond temptation, and the boldest passed on, nor presumed to tempt. She was unpopular; called "proud and freezing;" she did not extend the influence of The House; she did not confirm its fashion—fashion which necessitates social ease, and which no rank, no wealth, no virtue can of themselves suffice to give. And this failure on her part was a great offense in the eyes of the House of Vipont. "She does absolutely nothing for us," said Lady Selina; but Lady Selina in her heart was well pleased that to her in reality thus fell, almost without a rival, the female representation, in the great world, of the Vipont honors. Lady Selina was fashion itself.

Lady Montfort's social peculiarity was in the eagerness with which she sought the society of persons who enjoyed a reputation for superior intellect, whether statesmen, lawyers, authors, philosophers, artists. Intellectual intercourse seemed as if it was her native atmosphere, from which she was habitually banished, to which she returned with an instinctive yearning and a new zest of life; yet was she called, even here, nor seemingly without justice —capricious and unsteady in her likings. These clever

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personages, after a little while, all seemed to disappoint her expectations of them; she sought the acquaintance of each with cordial earnestness; slid from the acquaintance with weary langor; never, after all, less alone than when alone.

And so wondrous lovely! Nothing so rare as beauty of the high type; genius and beauty, indeed, are both rare; genius, which is the beauty of the mind — beauty, which is the genius of the body. But, of the two, beauty is the rarer. All of us can count on our fingers some forty or fifty persons of undoubted and illustrious genius, including those famous in action, letters, art. But can any of us remember to have seen more than four or five specimens of first-rate ideal beauty? Whosoever had seen Lady Montfort would have ranked her among such four or five in his recollection. There was in her face that lustrous dazzle to which the Latin poet, perhaps, refers when he speaks of the

> "Nitor
> Splendentis Pario marmore purius . . .
> Et voltus, nimium lubricus adspici,"

and which an English poet, with the less sensuous but more spiritual imagination of northern genius, has described in lines that an English reader may be pleased to see rescued from oblivion:

> "Her face was like the milky way i' the sky,
> A meeting of gentle lights without a name."

The eyes so purely bright, the exquisite harmony of coloring between the dark (not *too* dark) hair, and the ivory

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of the skin; such sweet radiance in the lip when it broke into a smile. And it was said that in her maiden day, before Caroline Lyndsay became Marchioness of Montfort, that smile was the most joyous thing imaginable. Absurd now; you would not think it, but that stately lady had been a wild, fanciful girl, with the merriest laugh and the quickest tear, filling the air round her with April sunshine. Certainly, no beings ever yet lived the life Nature intended them to live, nor had fair play for heart and mind, who contrived, by hook or by crook—to marry the wrong person!

CHAPTER VIII.

The interior of the Great House. The British Constitution at home in a Family Party.

GREAT was the family gathering that Christmas tide at Montfort Court. Thither flocked the cousins of the House in all degrees and of various ranks. From dukes who had nothing left to wish for that kings and cousinhoods can give, to briefless barristers and aspiring cornets, of equally good blood with the dukes — the superb family united its motley scions. Such reunions were frequent, they belonged to the hereditary policy of the House of Vipont. On this occasion the muster of the clan was more significant than usual; there was a "CRISIS" in the constitutional history of the British empire. A new Government had been suddenly formed within the last six

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weeks, which certainly portended some direful blow on our ancient institutions, for the House of Vipont had not been consulted in its arrangements, and was wholly unrepresented in the Ministry, even by a lordship of the Treasury. Carr Vipont had therefore summoned the patriotic and resentful kindred.

It is an hour or so after the conclusion of dinner. The gentlemen have joined the ladies in the state suite — a suite which the last Marquis had rearranged and redecorated in his old age — during the long illness that finally conducted him to his ancestors. During his earlier years that princely Marquis had deserted Montfort Court for a seat nearer to London, and therefore much more easily filled with that brilliant society of which he had been long the ornament and center. Railways not then existing for the annihilation of time and space, and a journey to a northern country four days with post-horses, making the invitations even of a Marquis of Montfort unalluring to languid beauties and gouty ministers. But nearing the end of his worldly career, this long neglect of the dwelling identified with his hereditary titles smote the conscience of the illustrious sinner. And other occupations beginning to pall, his lordship, accompanied and cheered by a chaplain, who had a fine taste in the decorative arts, came resolutely to Montfort Court; and there, surrounded with architects, and gilders, and upholsterers, redeemed his errors; and soothed by the reflection of the palace provided for his successor, added to his vaults — a coffin.

The suite expands before the eye. You are in the

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grand drawing-room, copied from that of Versailles. That is the picture, full length, of the late Marquis in his robes; its pendent is the late Marchioness, his wife. That table of malachite is a present from the Russian Emperor Alexander; that vase of Sèvre which rests on it was made for Marie Antoinette — see her portrait enameled in its centre. Through the open door at the far end your eye loses itself in a vista of other pompous chambers—the music-room, the statue hall, the orangery; other rooms there are appertaining to the suite — a ball-room fit for Babylon, a library that might have adorned Alexandria — but they are not lighted, nor required, on this occasion: it is strictly a family party, sixty guests and no more.

In the drawing-room three whist-tables carry off the more elderly and grave. The piano, in the music-room, attracts a younger group. Lady Selina Vipont's eldest daughter Honoria, a young lady not yet brought out, but about to be brought out the next season, is threading a wonderfully intricate German piece —

"Linked music long drawn out,"

with variations. Her science is consummate. No pains have been spared on her education; elaborately accomplished, she is formed to be the sympathizing spouse of a wealthy statesman. Lady Montfort is seated by an elderly duchess, who is good-natured, and a great talker; near her are seated two middle-aged gentlemen, who had been conversing with her till the duchess, having cut in, turned dialogue into monologue.

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The elder of these two gentlemen is Mr. Carr Vipont, bald, with clipped parliamentary whiskers; values himself on a likeness to Canning, but with a portlier presence—looks a large-acred man. Carr Vipont has about £40,000 a year; has often refused office for himself, while taking care that other Viponts should have it; is a great authority in Committee business and the rules of the House of Commons; speaks very seldom, and at no great length, never arguing, merely stating his opinion, carries great weight with him, and as he votes, vote fifteen other members of the House of Vipont, besides admiring satellites. He can therefore turn divisions, and has decided the fate of cabinets. A pleasant man, a little consequential, but the reverse of haughty — unctuously overbearing. The other gentleman, to whom he is listening, is our old acquaintance Colonel Alban Vipont Morley—Darrell's friend—George's uncle—a man of importance, not inferior, indeed, to that of his kinsman Carr; an authority in club-rooms, an oracle in drawing-rooms, a first-rate man of the *beau monde*. Alban Morley, a younger brother, had entered the Guards young; retired, young also, from the Guards with the rank of colonel, and on receipt of a legacy from an old aunt, which, with the interest derived from the sum at which he sold his commission, allowed him a clear income of £1000 a year. This modest income sufficed for all his wants, fine gentleman though he was. He had refused to go into Parliament — refused a high place in a public department. Single himself, he showed his respect for wedlock by the

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interest he took in the marriages of other people — just as Earl Warwick, too wise to set up for a king, gratified his passion for royalty by becoming the king-maker. The colonel was exceedingly accomplished, a very fair scholar, knew most modern languages. In painting an amateur, in music a connoisseur; witty at times, and with wit of a high quality, but thrifty in the expenditure of it; too wise to be known as a wit. Manly too, a daring rider, who had won many a fox's brush, a famous deer-stalker, and one of the few English gentlemen who still keep up the noble art of fencing — twice a week to be seen, foil in hand, against all comers in Angelo's rooms. Thin, well-shaped — not handsome, my dear young lady, far from it, but with an air so thoroughbred, that, had you seen him in the day when the opera-house had a crush-room and a fops' alley — seen him in either of those resorts, surrounded by elaborate dandies, and showy beauty-men—dandies and beauty-men would have seemed to you second-rate and vulgar; and the eye, fascinated by that quiet form—plain in manner, plain in dress, plain in feature — you would have said, "How very distinguished it is to be so plain!" Knowing the great world from the core to the cuticle, and on that knowledge basing authority and position, Colonel Morley was not calculating — not cunning — not suspicious. His sagacity the more quick because its movements were straightforward. Intimate with the greatest, but sought, not seeking. Not a flatterer nor a parasite. But when his advice was asked (even if advice necessitated reproof), giving it with mili-

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tary candor. In fine, a man of such social reputation as rendered him an ornament and prop to the House of Vipont; and with unsuspected depths of intelligence and feeling which lay in the lower strata of his knowledge of this world, to witness of some other one, and justified Darrell in commending a boy like Lionel Haughton to the Colonel's friendly care and admonitory counsels. The Colonel, like other men, had his weakness, if weakness it *can* be called: he believed that the House of Vipont was not merely the Corinthian capital, but the embattled keep — not merely the *dulce decus*, but the *præsidium columenque rerum* of the British monarchy. He did not boast of his connection with the House; he did not provoke your spleen by enlarging on its manifold virtues; he would often have his harmless jest against its members or even against its pretensions, but such seeming evidences of forbearance or candor were cunning devices to mitigate envy. His devotion to the House was not obtrusive, it was profound. He loved the House of Vipont for the sake of England, he loved England for the sake of the House of Vipont. Had it been possible, by some tremendous reversal of the ordinary laws of nature, to dissociate the cause of England from the cause of the House of Vipont, the Colonel would have said, "Save at least the Ark of the Constitution! and rally round the old House!"

The Colonel had none of Guy Darrell's infirmity of family pride; he cared not a rush for mere pedigrees — much too liberal and enlightened for such obsolete pre-

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the house of Vipont — especially in a CRISIS like the present. Singular man! For all the use he is to us he might as well be dead! But he has a fine fortune—what will he do with it?"

THE DUCHESS. "My dear Lady Montfort, you have hurt yourself with that paper-cutter."

LADY MONTFORT. "No, indeed. Hush! we are disturbing Mr. Carr Vipont."

The Duchess, in awe of Carr Vipont, sinks her voice, and gabbles on — whisperously.

CARR VIPONT (resuming the subject). "A very fine fortune — what will he do with it?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "I don't know, but I had a letter from him some months ago."

CARR VIPONT. "You had — and never told me!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Of no importance to you, my dear Carr. His letter merely introduced to me a charming young fellow — a kinsman of his own (no Vipont) — Lionel Haughton, son of poor Charlie Haughton, whom you may remember."

CARR VIPONT. "Yes, a handsome scamp — went to the dogs. So Darrell takes up Charlie's son — what! as his heir?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "In his letter to me he anticipated that question in the negative."

CARR VIPONT. "Has Darrell any nearer kinsmen?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Not that I know of."

CARR VIPONT. "Perhaps he will select one of his wife's family for his heir — a Vipont; I should not wonder."

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COLONEL MORLEY (dryly). "I should. But why may not Darrell marry again? I always thought he would — I think so still."

CARR VIPONT (glancing toward his own daughter Honoria). "Well, a wife well-chosen might restore him to society, and to us. Pity, indeed, that so great an intellect should be suspended — a voice so eloquent hushed. You are right; in this CRISIS, Guy Darrell once more in the House of Commons, we should have all we require — an orator, a debater! Very odd, but at this moment we have no speakers — WE, the Viponts!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Yourself?"

CARR VIPONT. "You are too kind. I can speak on occasions; but regularly, no. Too much drudgery — not young enough to take to it now. So you think Darrell will marry again? A remarkably fine-looking fellow when I last saw him; not old yet; I dare say, well-preserved. I wish I had thought of asking him here — Montfort!" (Lord Montfort, with one or two male friends, was passing by toward a billiard-room, opening through a side-door from the regular suite) — "Montfort! only think, we forgot to invite Guy Darrell. Is it too late before our party breaks up?"

LORD MONTFORT (sullenly). "I don't choose Guy Darrell to be invited to my house."

Carr Vipont was literally stunned by a reply so contumacious. Lord Montfort demur at what Carr Vipont suggested! He could not believe his senses.

"Not choose, my dear Montfort! you are joking. A

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monstrous clever fellow, Guy Darrell, and at this CRISIS — "

"I hate clever fellows — no such bores!" said Lord Montfort, breaking from the caressing clasp of Carr Vipont, and stalking away.

"Spare your regrets, my dear Carr," said Colonel Morley. "Darrell is not in England — I rather believe he is in Verona." Therewith the Colonel sauntered toward the group gathered round the piano. A little time afterward Lady Montfort escaped from the Duchess, and, mingling courteously with her livelier guests, found herself close to Colonel Morley. "Will you give me my revenge at chess?" she asked, with her rare smile. The Colonel was charmed. As they sat down and ranged their men, Lady Montfort remarked, carelessly —

"I overheard you say you had lately received a letter from Mr. Darrell. Does he write as if well — cheerful? You remember that I was much with his daughter, much in his house, when I was a child. He was ever most kind to me." Lady Montfort's voice here faltered.

"He writes with no reference to himself, his health or his spirits. But his young kinsman described him to me as in good health — wonderfully young-looking for his years. But cheerful — no! Darrell and I entered the world together; we were friends as much as a man so busy and eminent as he could be friends with a man like myself — indolent by habit, and obscure out of Mayfair. I know his nature; we both know something of his family sorrows. He can not be happy! Impossible! — alone —

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childless — secluded. Poor Darrell, abroad now; in Verona, too! — the dullest place! in mourning still for Romeo and Juliet! — 'Tis your turn to move. In his letter Darrell talked of going on to Greece, Asia — penetrating into the depths of Africa — the wildest schemes! Dear Country Guy, as we called him at Eton! — what a career his might have been! Don't let us talk of him, it makes me mournful. Like Goethe, I avoid painful subjects upon principle."

LADY MONTFORT. "No — we will not talk of him. No — I take the Queen's pawn. No, we will not talk of him! — no!"

The game proceeded; the Colonel was within three moves of checkmating his adversary. Forgetting the resolution come to, he said, as she paused, and seemed despondently meditating a hopeless defense —

"Pray, my fair cousin, what makes Montfort dislike my old friend Darrell?"

"Dislike! Does he? I don't know. Vanquished again, Colonel Morley!" She rose; and, as he restored the chessmen to their box, she leaned thoughtfully over the table.

"This young kinsman — will he not be a comfort to Mr. Darrell?

"He would be a comfort and a pride to a father; but to Darrell, so distant a kinsman — comfort! — why and how? Darrell will provide for him, that is all. A very gentlemanlike young man — gone to Paris by my advice — wants polish and knowledge of life. When he comes

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back he must enter society; I have put his name up at White's; may I introduce him to you?"

Lady Montfort hesitated, and, after a pause, said almost rudely, "No."

She left the Colonel, slightly shrugging his shoulders, and passed into the billiard-room with a quick step. Some ladies were already there, looking at the players. Lord Montfort was chalking his cue. Lady Montfort walked straight up to him; her color was heightened; her lip was quivering; she placed her hand on his shoulder with a wifelike boldness. It seemed as if she had come there to seek him from an impulse of affection. She asked with a hurried fluttering kindness of voice, "If he had been successful?" and called him by his Christian name. Lord Montfort's countenance, before merely apathetic, now assumed an expression of extreme distaste. "Come to teach me to make a cannon, I suppose!" he said, mutteringly, and, turning from her, contemplated the balls and missed the cannon.

"Rather in my way, Lady Montfort," said he then, and retiring to a corner, said no more.

Lady Montfort's countenance became still more flushed. She lingered a moment, returned to the drawing-room, and for the rest of the evening was uncommonly animated, gracious, fascinating. As she retired with her lady guests for the night, she looked round, saw Colonel Morley, and held out her hand to him. "Your nephew comes here to-morrow," said she, "my old playfellow; impossible quite to forget old friends — good-night."

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CHAPTER IX.

"Les extremes se touchent."

THE next day the gentlemen were dispersed out of doors — a large shooting party. Those who did not shoot, walked forth to inspect the racing stud or the model farm. The ladies had taken their walk; some were in their own rooms, some in the reception rooms, at work, or reading, or listening to the piano — Honoria Carr Vipont again performing. Lady Montfort was absent; Lady Selina kindly supplied the hostess' place. Lady Selina was embroidering, with great skill and taste, a pair of slippers for her eldest boy, who was just entered at Oxford, having left Eton with a reputation of being the neatest dresser, and not the worst cricketer, of that renowned educational institute. It is a mistake to suppose that fine ladies are not sometimes very fond mothers and affectionate wives. Lady Selina, beyond her family circle, was trivial, unsympathizing, cold-hearted, supercilious by temperament, never kind but through policy, artificial as clock-work. But in her own home, to her husband, her children, Lady Selina was a very good sort of woman. Devotedly attached to Carr Vipont, exaggerating his talents, thinking him the first man in England, careful of his honor, zealous for his interests, soothing in his cares, tender in his ailments. To her girls prudent and watchful — to her boys

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indulgent and caressing. Minutely attentive to the education of the first, according to her high-bred ideas of education — and they really were "superior" girls, with much instruction and well-balanced minds. Less authoritative with the last, because boys being not under her immediate control, her sense of responsibility allowed her to display more fondness and less dignity in her intercourse with them than with young ladies who must learn from her example, as well as her precepts, the patrician decorum which becomes the smooth result of impulse restrained and emotion checked. Boys might make a noise in the world, girls should make none. Lady Selina, then, was working the slippers for her absent son, her heart being full of him at that moment. She was describing his character, and expatiating on his promise to two or three attentive listeners, all interested, as being themselves of the Vipont brood, in the probable destiny of the heir to the Carr Viponts.

"In short," said Lady Selina, winding up, "as soon as Reginald is of age we shall get him into Parliament. Carr has always lamented that he himself was not broken into office early; Reginald must be. Nothing so requisite for public men as early training — makes them practical, and not too sensitive to what those horrid newspaper men say. That was Pitt's great advantage. Reginald has ambition; he should have occupation to keep him out of mischief. It is an anxious thing for a mother, when a son is good-looking—such danger of his being spoiled by the women — yes, my dear, it *is* a small foot, very small — his father's foot."

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"If Lord Montfort should have no family," said a somewhat distant and subaltern Vipont, whisperingly and hesitating, "does not the title—"

"No, my dear," interrupted Lady Selina; "no, the title does not come to us. It is a melancholy thought, but the marquisate, in that case, is extinct. No other heir-male from Gilbert, the first Marquis. Carr says there is even likely to be some dispute about the earldom. The Barony, of course, is safe; goes with the Irish estates, and most of the English — and goes (don't you know?)—to Sir James Vipont, the last person who ought to have it; the quietest, stupidest creature; not brought up to the sort of thing — a mere gentleman farmer on a small estate in Devonshire."

"He is not here?"

"No. Lord Montfort does not like him. Very natural. Nobody does like his heir, if not his own child, and some people don't even like their own eldest sons! Shocking; but so it is. Montfort is the kindest, most tractable being that ever was, except where he takes a dislike. He dislikes two or three people very much."

"True; how he did dislike poor Mrs. Lyndsay!" said one of the listeners, smiling.

"Mrs. Lyndsay, yes — dear Lady Montfort's mother. I can't say I pitied her, though I was sorry for Lady Montfort. How Mrs. Lyndsay ever took in Montfort for Caroline I can't conceive! How she had the face to think of it! He, a mere youth at the time! Kept secret from all his family — even from his grandmother — the

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darkest transaction. I don't wonder that he never forgave it."

First Listener. "Caroline has beauty enough to—"

Lady Selina (interrupting). "Beauty, of course—no one can deny *that*. But not at all suited to such a position; not brought up to the sort of thing. Poor Montfort! he should have married a different kind of woman altogether—a woman like his grandmother, the last Lady Montfort. Caroline does nothing for the House—nothing—has not even a child—most unfortunate affair."

Second Listener. "Mrs. Lyndsay was very poor, was she not? Caroline, I suppose, had no opportunity of forming those tastes and habits which are necessary for—for—"

Lady Selina (helping the listener). "For such a position and such a fortune. You are quite right, my dear. People brought up in one way can not accommodate themselves to another; and it is odd, but I have observed that people brought up poor can accommodate themselves less to being very rich than people brought up rich to accommodate themselves to being very poor. As Carr says, in his pointed way, 'it is easier to stoop than to climb.' Yes; Mrs. Lyndsay was, you know, a daughter of Seymour Vipont, who was for so many years in the Administration, with a fair income from his salary, and nothing out of it. She married one of the Scotch Lyndsays—good family, of course—with a very moderate property. She was left a widow young, with an only

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child, Caroline. Came to town, with a small jointure. The late Lady Montfort was very kind to her. So were we all — took her up — pretty woman — pretty manners —worldly—oh, very! I don't like worldly people. Well, but all of a sudden, a dreadful thing happened. The heir-at-law disputed the jointure, denied that Lyndsay had any right to make settlements on the Scotch property — very complicated business. But, luckily for her, Vipont Crooke's daughter, her cousin and intimate friend, had married Darrell—the famous Darrell—who was then at the bar. It is very useful to have cousins married to clever people. He was interested in her case, took it up. I believe it did not come on in the courts in which Darrell practiced. But he arranged all the evidence, inspected the briefs, spent a great deal of his own money in getting up the case — and, in fact, he gained her cause, though he could not be her counsel. People did say that she was so grateful that, after his wife's death, she had set her heart on becoming Mrs. Darrell the second. But Darrell was then quite wrapped up in politics — the last man to fall in love — and only looked bored when women fell in love with him, which a good many did. Grand-looking creature, my dear, and quite the rage for a year or two. However, Mrs. Lyndsay all of a sudden went off to Paris, and there Montfort saw Caroline, and was caught. Mrs. Lyndsay, no doubt, calculated on living with her daughter, having the run of Montfort House in town and Montfort Court in the country. But Montfort

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is deeper than people think for. No, he never forgave her. She was never asked here — took it to heart, went to Rome, and died."

At this moment the door opened, and George Morley, now the Rev. George Morley, entered, just arrived to join his cousins.

Some knew him, some did not. Lady Selina, who made it a point to know all the cousins, rose graciously, put aside the slippers, and gave him two fingers. She was astonished to find him not nearly so shy as he used to be — wonderfully improved; at his ease, cheerful, animated. The man now was in his right place, and following hope on the bent of inclination. Few men are shy when in their right places. He asked after Lady Montfort. She was in her own small sitting-room, writing letters — letters that Carr Vipont had entreated her to write — correspondence useful to the House of Vipont. Before long, however, a servant entered to say that Lady Montfort would be very happy to see Mr. Morley. George followed the servant into that unpretending sitting-room, with its simple chintzes and quiet bookshelves — room that would not have been too fine for a cottage.

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CHAPTER X.

In every life, go it fast, go it slow, there are critical pausing places. When the journey is renewed, the face of the country is changed.

How well she suited that simple room—herself so simply dressed—her marvellous beauty so exquisitely subdued. She looked at home there, as if all of home that the house could give were there collected.

She had finished and sealed the momentous letters, and had come, with a sense of relief, from the table at the farther end of the room, on which those letters, ceremonious and conventional, had been written — come to the window, which, though mid-winter, was open, and the red-breast, with whom she had made friends, hopped boldly almost within reach, looking at her with bright eyes, and head curiously aslant. By the window a single chair and a small reading-desk, with the book lying open. The short day was not far from its close, but there was ample light still in the skies, and a serene if chilly stillness in the air without.

Though expecting the relation she had just summoned to her presence, I fear she had half forgotten him. She was standing by the window deep in reverie as he entered, so deep that she started when his voice struck her ear and he stood before her. She recovered herself quickly,

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however, and said with even more than her ordinary kindliness of tone and manner toward the scholar — "I am so glad to see and congratulate you."

"And I so glad to receive your congratulations," answered the scholar, in smooth, slow voice, without a stutter.

"But, George, how is this?" asked Lady Montfort. "Bring that chair, sit down here, and tell me all about it. You wrote me word you were cured, at least sufficiently to remove your noble scruples. You did not say how. Your uncle tells me by patient will and resolute practice."

"Under good guidance. But I am going to confide to you a secret, if you will promise to keep it."

"Oh, you may trust me; I have no female friends."

The clergyman smiled, and spoke at once of the lessons he had received from the basket-maker.

"I have his permission," he said, in conclusion, "to confide the service he rendered me, the intimacy that has sprung up between us, but to you alone — not a word to your guests. When you have once seen him, you will understand why an eccentric man, who has known better days, would shrink from the impertinent curiosity of idle customers. Contented with his humble livelihood, he asks but liberty and repose."

"That I already comprehend," said Lady Montfort, half sighing, half smiling. "But my curiosity shall not molest him, and when I visit the village, I will pass by his cottage."

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"Nay, my dear Lady Montfort, that would be to refuse the favor I am about to ask, which is, that you would come with me to that very cottage. It would so please him."

"Please him — why?"

"Because this poor man has a young female grandchild, and he is so anxious that you should see and be kind to her, and because, too, he seems most tenacious to remain in his present residence. The cottage, of course, belongs to Lord Montfort, and is let to him by the bailiff, and if you deign to feel interest in him, his tenure is safe."

Lady Montfort looked down, and colored. She thought, perhaps, how false a security her protection, and how slight an influence her interest would be, but she did not say so. George went on; and so eloquently and so touchingly did he describe both grandsire and grandchild, so skillfully did he intimate the mystery which hung over them, that Lady Montfort became much moved by his narrative, and willingly promised to accompany him across the park to the basket-maker's cottage the first opportunity. But when one has sixty guests in one's house, one has to wait for an opportunity to escape from them unremarked. And the opportunity, in fact, did not come for many days — not till the party broke up — save one or two dowager she-cousins who "gave no trouble," and one or two bachelor he-cousins whom my lord retained to consummate the slaughter of pheasants, and play at billiards in the dreary intervals between sunset and dinner — dinner and bedtime.

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Then one cheerful frosty noon George Morley and his fair cousin walked boldly, *en evidence*, before the prying ghostly windows, across the broad gravel-walks — gained the secluded shrubbery, the solitary deeps of parkland — skirted the wide sheet of water — and passing through a private wicket in the paling, suddenly came upon the patch of osier-ground and humble garden, which were backed by the basket-maker's cottage.

As they entered those lowly precincts a child's laugh was borne to their ears—a child's silvery, musical, mirthful laugh; it was long since the great lady had heard a laugh like that — a happy child's natural laugh. She paused and listened with a strange pleasure. "Yes," whispered George Morley, "stop — and hush! there they are."

Waife was seated on the stump of a tree, materials for his handicraft lying beside, neglected. Sophy was standing before him — he, raising his finger as in reproof, and striving hard to frown. As the intruders listened, they overheard that he was striving to teach her the rudiments of French dialogue, and she was laughing merrily at her own blunders and at the solemn affectation of the shocked schoolmaster. Lady Montfort noted with no unnatural surprise the purity of idiom and of accent, with which this singular basket-maker was unconsciously displaying his perfect knowledge of a language, which the best educated English gentleman of that generation, nay, even of this, rarely speaks with accuracy and elegance. But her attention was diverted immediately from the teacher

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to the face of the sweet pupil. Women have a quick appreciation of beauty in their own sex — and women, who are themselves beautiful, not the least. Irresistibly Lady Montfort felt attracted toward that innocent countenance, so lively in its mirth, and yet so softly gay. Sir Isaac, who had hitherto lain *perdu*, watching the movements of a thrush amidst a holly-bush, now started up with a bark. Waife rose — Sophy turned half in flight. The visitors approached.

Here, slowly, lingeringly, let fall the curtain. In the frank license of narrative, years will have rolled away ere the curtain rise again. Events that may influence a life often date from moments the most serene, from things that appear as trivial and unnoticeable as the great lady's visit to the basket-maker's cottage. Which of those lives will that visit influence hereafter — the woman's, the child's, the vagrant's? Whose? Probably little that passes now would aid conjecture, or be a visible link in the chain of destiny. A few desultory questions — a few guarded answers — a look or so, a musical syllable or two exchanged between the lady and the child — a basket bought, or a promise to call again. Nothing worth the telling. Be it then untold. View only the scene itself as the curtain drops reluctantly. The rustic cottage, its garden-door open, and open its old-fashioned lattice casements. You can see how neat and cleanly, how eloquent of healthful poverty, how remote from squalid penury, the whitewashed walls, the homely furniture within. Creepers lately trained around the door-way. Christmas holly, with berries red

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against the window-panes; the beehive yonder; a starling, too, outside the threshold, in its wicker cage. In the background (all the rest of the neighboring hamlet out of sight), the church-spire tapering away into the clear blue wintry sky. All has an air of repose — of safety. Close beside you is the Presence of HOME — that ineffable, sheltering, loving Presence — which, amidst solitude, murmurs "not solitary;" a Presence unvouchsafed to the great lady in the palace she has left. And the lady herself? She is resting on the rude gnarled root-stump from which the vagrant had risen; she has drawn Sophy toward her; she has taken the child's hand; she is speaking now — now listening; and on her face kindness looks like happiness. Perhaps she *is* happy at that moment. And Waife? he is turning aside his weather-beaten, mobile countenance, with his hand anxiously trembling upon the young scholar's arm. The scholar whispers, "Are you satisfied with me?" and Waife answers in a voice as low but more broken, "God reward you! Oh, joy! — if my pretty one has found at last a woman friend!" Poor vagabond, he has now a calm asylum — a fixed humble livelihood — more than that, he has just achieved an object fondly cherished. His past life — alas! what has he done with it? His actual life — broken fragment though it be — is at rest now. But still the everlasting question — mocking, terrible question — with its phrasing of farce and its enigmas of tragical sense — "WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?" Do with what? The all that remains to him — the all he holds! — the all which man himself, betwixt

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free-will and pre-decree is permitted to do. Ask not the vagrant alone — ask each of the four there assembled on that flying bridge called the Moment. Time before thee — what wilt *thou* do with it? Ask thyself! — ask the wisest! Out of effort to answer that question, what dream-schools have risen, never wholly to perish! The science of seers on the Chaldee's Pur-Tor, or in the rock-caves of Delphi, gasped after and grasped at by horn-handed mechanics to-day in their lanes and alleys. To the heart of the populace sink down the blurred relics of what once was the lore of the secretest sages — hieroglyphical tatters which the credulous vulgar attempt to interpret — "WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?" Ask Merle and his Crystal! But the curtain descends! Yet a moment, there they are — age and childhood — poverty, wealth, station, vagabondage; the preacher's sacred learning and august ambition; fancies of dawning reason; — hopes of intellect matured; — memories of existence wrecked; household sorrows — untold regrets — elegy and epic in low, close, human sighs, to which Poetry never yet gave voice — all for the moment personified there before you — a glimpse for the guess — no more. Lower and lower falls the curtain! All is blank!

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BOOK SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

Being an Address to the Reader.

SEEING the length to which this Work has already run, and the space it must yet occupy in the columns of Maga, it is but fair to the Reader to correct any inconsiderate notion that the Author does not know "what he will do with it." Learn, then, O friendly reader, that no matter the number of months through which it may glide its way to thine eyes — learn that with the single exception of the chapter now respectfully addressed to thee, THE WHOLE OF THIS WORK HAS BEEN LONG SINCE COMPLETED AND TRANSFERRED FROM THE DESK OF THE AUTHOR TO THE HANDS OF THE PUBLISHER.

On the 22d of January last — let the day be marked with a white stone! — the Author's labors were brought to a close, and "What he will do with it" is no longer a secret — at least to the Editor of Maga.

May this information establish, throughout the rest of the journey to be travelled together, that tacit confidence between Author and Reader which is so important to mutual satisfaction!

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Firstly. — The Reader may thus have the complaisance to look at each installment as the component portion of a completed whole; comprehending that it can not be within the scope of the Author's design to aim at a separate effect for each separate Number; but rather to carry on through each Number the effect which he deems most appropriate to his composition when regarded as a whole. And here may it be permitted to dispel an erroneous idea which, to judge by current criticism, appears to be sufficiently prevalent to justify the egotism of comment. It seems to be supposed that, because this work is published from month to month in successive installments, therefore it is written from month to month, as a newspaper article may be dashed off from day to day. Such a supposition is adverse to all the principles by which works that necessitate integrity of plan, and a certain harmony of proportion, are constructed; more especially those works which aim at artistic representations of human life; for, in human life, we must presume that nothing is left to chance, and chance must be no less rigidly banished from the art by which human life is depicted. That art admits no hap-hazard chapters, no uncertainty as to the consequences that must ensue from the incidents it decides on selecting. Would the artist, on after-thought, alter a consequence, he must reconsider the whole chain-work of incident which led to one inevitable result, and which would be wholly defective if it could be made to lead to another. Hence, a work of this kind can not be written *currente calamo*, from month to month;

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the entire design must be broadly set forth before the first page goes to press; and large sections of the whole must be always completed in advance, in order to allow time for deliberate forethought, and fair opportunity for such revisions, as an architect, having prepared all his plans, must still admit to his building, should difficulties, not foreseen, sharpen the invention to render each variation in detail an improvement consistent to the original design.

Secondly. — May the Reader — accepting this profession of the principles by which is constructed the history that invites his attention, and receiving now the assurance that the Work has actually passed out of the Author's hands, is as much a thing done and settled as any book composed by him twenty years ago — banish all fear lest each Number should depend for its average merit on accidental circumstances — such as impatient haste, or varying humor, or capricious health, or the demand of more absorbing and practical pursuits, in which, during a considerable portion of the year, it has long been the Author's lot to be actively engaged. Certes, albeit in the course of his life he has got through a reasonable degree of labor, and has habitually relied on application to supply his defects in genius; yet to do one thing at a time is the practical rule of those by whom, in the course of time, many things have been accomplished. And accordingly a work, even so trivial as this may be deemed, is not composed in the turmoil of metropolitan life, nor when other occupations demand attention, but in the quiet loisure of rural shades, and in those portions of the year

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which fellow-workmen devote to relaxation and amusement. For even in holidays, something of a holiday-task adds a zest to the hours of ease.

Lastly. — Since this survey of our modern world requires a large and a crowded canvas, and would be incomplete did it not intimate those points of contact in which the private touches the public life of Social Man, so it is well that the Reader should fully understand that all reference to such grand events, as political "crises" and changes of Government, were written many months ago, and have no reference whatever to the actual occurrences of the passing day. Holding it, indeed, a golden maxim that practical politics and ideal art should be kept wholly distinct from each other, and seeking in this Narrative to write that which may be read with unembittered and impartial pleasure by all classes and all parties — nay, perchance, in years to come, by the children of those whom he now addresses — the Author deems it indispensable to such ambition to preserve the neutral ground of imaginative creation, not only free from those personal portraitures which are fatal to comprehensive and typical delineations of character, but from all intentional appeals to an interest which can be but momentary, if given to subjects that best befit the leading articles of political journals. His realm, if it hope to endure, is in the conditions, the humors, the passions by which one general phase of society stands forth in the broad light of our common human nature, never to be cast aside, as obsolete and out of fashion, "into the portion of weeds and worn-out faces."

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Reader! this exordium is intended, by way of preface to that more important division of this work, in which the one-half the circle rounds itself slowly on to complete the whole. Forgive the exordium; for, rightly considered, it is but an act of deference to thee. Didst thou ever reflect, O Reader! on what thou art to an Author? Art thou aware of the character of dignity and power with which he invests thee? To thee the Author is but an unit in the great sum of intellectual existence. To the Author, thou, O Reader! art the collective representative of a multifarious abiding audience. To thee the Author is but the machine, more or less defective, that throws off a kind of work usually so ephemeral that seldom wilt thou even pause to examine why it please or displease, for a day, the taste that may change with the morrow. But to him, the Author, thou art, O Reader! a confidant and a friend, often nearer and dearer than any one else in the world. All other friends are mortal as himself; they can but survive for a few years the dust he must yield to the grave. But there, in his eye, aloof and aloft forever, stands the Reader, more and more his friend as Time rolls on. 'Tis to thee that he leaves his grandest human bequest, his memory and his name. If secretly he deem himself not appreciated in his own generation, he hugs the belief, often chimerical and vain, but ever sweet and consoling, that in some generation afar awaits the Reader destined at last to do him justice. With thee, the Author is, of all men, he to whom old age comes the soonest. How

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quickly thou hastenest to say, "Not what he was! Vigor is waning — invention is flagging—past is his day—push him aside, and make room for the Fresh and the New." But the Author never admits that old age can fall on the Reader. The Reader to him is a being in whom youth is renewed through all cycles. Leaning on his crutch, the Author still walks by the side of that friendly Shadow as he walked on summer eves, with a school-friend of boyhood—talking of the future with artless, hopeful lips! Dreams he that a day may come when he will have no Reader! O school-boy! dost thou ever dream that a day may come when thou wilt have no friend?

CHAPTER II.

Etchings of Hyde Park in the month of June, which, if this History escape those villains the trunk-makers, may be of inestimable value to unborn antiquarians. — Characters, long absent, reappear and give some account of themselves.

FIVE years have passed away since this History opened. It is the month of June, once more—June, which clothes our London in all its glory; fills its languid ball-rooms with living flowers, and its stony causeways with human butterflies. It is about the hour of 6 P.M. The lounge in Hyde Park is crowded; along the road that skirts the Serpentine crawl the carriages one after the other; congregate, by the rails, the lazy lookers-on—lazy in attitude,

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but with active eyes, and tongues sharpened on the whetstone of scandal; the scaligers of Club windows airing their vocabulary in the Park. Slowly saunter on footidlers of all degrees in the hierarchy of London *idlesse;* dandies of established fame — youthful tyros in their first season. Yonder, in the Ride, forms less inanimate seem condemned to active exercise; young ladies doing penance in a canter; old beaux at hard labor in a trot. Sometimes, by a more thoughtful brow, a still brisker pace, you recognize a busy member of the Imperial Parliament, who, advised by physicians to be as much on horseback as possible, snatches an hour or so in the interval between the close of his Committee and the interest of the Debate, and shirks the opening speech of a well known bore. Among such truant lawgivers (grief it is to say it) may be seen that once model member, Sir Jasper Stollhead. Grim dyspepsia seizing on him at last, "relaxation from his duties" becomes the adequate punishment for all his sins. Solitary he rides, and, communing with himself, yawns at every second. Upon chairs, beneficently located under the trees toward the north side of the walk, are interspersed small knots and coteries in repose. There, you might see the Ladies Prymme, still the Ladies Prymme — Janet and Wilhelmina; Janet has grown fat, Wilhelmina thin. But thin or fat, they are no less Prymmes. They do not lack male attendants; they are girls of high fashion, with whom young men think it a distinction to be talking; of high principle, too, and high pretensions (unhappily for themselves they are coheiresses),

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by whom young men under the rank of earls need not fear to be artfully entrapped into "honorable intentions." They coquet majestically, but they never flirt; they exact devotion, but they do not ask in each victim a sacrifice on the horns of the altar; they will never give their hands where they do not give their hearts; and being ever afraid that they are courted for their money, they will never give their hearts save to wooers who have much more money than themselves. Many young men stop to do passing homage to the Ladies Prymme; some linger to converse—safe young men, they are all younger sons. Farther on, Lady Frost and Mr. Crampe the wit, sit amicably side by side, pecking at each other with sarcastic beaks; occasionally desisting, to fasten nip and claw upon that common enemy, the passing friend! The Slowes, a numerous family, but taciturn, sit by themselves—bowed to much; accosted rarely.

Note that man of good presence, somewhere about thirty, or a year or two more, who, recognized by most of the loungers, seems not at home in the lounge. He has passed by the various coteries just described, made his obeisance to the Ladies Prymme, received an icy epigram from Lady Frost, and a laconic sneer from Mr. Crampe, and exchanged silent bows with seven silent Slowes. He has wandered on, looking high in the air, but still looking for some one, not in the air, and, evidently disappointed in his search, comes to a full stop at length, takes off his hat, wipes his brow, utters a petulant "Prr—r—pshaw!" and seeing, a little in the background,

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the chairless shade of a thin, emaciated, dusty tree, thither he retires, and seats himself with as little care whether there to seat himself be the right thing in the right place, as if in the honey-suckle arbor of a village inn. "It serves me right," said he, to himself, "a precocious villain bursts in upon me, breaks my day, makes an appointment to meet here, in these very walks, ten minutes before six; decoys me with the promise of a dinner at Putney—room looking on the river, and fried flounders. I have the credulity to yield; I derange my habits—I leave my cool studio; I put off my easy blouse; I imprison my free-born throat in a cravat invented by the Thugs; the dog-days are at hand, and I walk rashly over scorching pavements in a black frock-coat, and a brimless hat; I annihilate 3*s.* 6*d.* in a pair of kid gloves; I arrive at this haunt of spleen; I run the gauntlet of Frosts, Slowes, and Prymmes;—and my traitor fails me! Half past six — not a sign of him! and the dinner at Putney—fried flounders? Dreams! Patience, five minutes more; if then he comes not—breach for life between him and me! Ah, *voilà!* there he comes, the laggard! But how those fine folks are catching at him! Has he asked them also to dinner at Putney, and do *they* care for fried flounders?"

The soliloquist's eye is on a young man, much younger than himself, who is threading the motley crowd with a light quick step, but is compelled to stop at each moment to interchange a word of welcome, a shake of the hand. Evidently he has already a large acquaintance; evidently

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he is popular, on good terms with the world and himself. What free grace in his bearing! what gay good-humor in his smile! Powers above! Lady Wilhelmina surely blushes as she returns his bow. He has passed Lady Frost unblighted; the Slowes evince emotion, at least the female Slowes, as he shoots by them with that sliding bow. He looks from side to side, with a rapid glance of an eye in which light seems all dance and sparkle; he sees the soliloquist under the meagre tree—the pace quickens, the lips part, half laughing.

"Don't scold, Vance. I am late, I know; but I did not make allowance for interceptions."

"Body o' me, interceptions! For an absentee just arrived in London, you seem to have no lack of friends."

"Friends made in Paris, and found again here at every corner, like pleasant surprises. But no friend so welcome, and dear, as Frank Vance."

"Sensible of the honor, O Lionello the magnificent. Verily you are *bon Prince!* The Houses of Valois and of Medici were always kind to artists. But whither would you lead me? Back into that tread-mill? Thank you, humbly; no. A crowd in fine clothes is of all mobs the dullest. I can look undismayed on the many-headed monster, wild and rampant; but when the many-headed monster buys its hats in Bond Street, and has an eye-glass at each of its inquisitive eyes, I confess I take fright. Besides, it is near seven o'clock; Putney not visible, and the flounders not fried!"

"My cab is waiting yonder; we must walk to it — we

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can keep on the turf, and avoid the throng. But tell me honestly, Vance, do you really dislike to mix in crowds—you, with your fame, dislike the eyes that turn back to look again, and the lips that respectfully murmur, 'Vance, the Painter?' Ah, I always said you would be a great painter. And in five short years you have soared high."

"Pooh!" answered Vance, indifferently. "Nothing is pure and unadulterated in London use; not cream, nor cayenne pepper—least of all, Fame; mixed up with the most deleterious ingredients. Fame! did you read the *Times'* critique on my pictures in the present Exhibition? Fame, indeed! Change the subject. Nothing so good as flounders. Ho! is that your cab? Superb! Car fit for the 'Grecian youth of talents rare,' in Mr. Enfield's *Speaker;* horse that seems conjured out of the Elgin marbles. Is he quiet?"

"Not very; but trust to my driving. You may well admire the horse—present from Darrell, chosen by Colonel Morley."

When the young men had settled themselves in the vehicle, Lionel dismissed his groom, and, touching his horse, the animal trotted out briskly.

"Frank," said Lionel, shaking his dark curls with a petulant gravity, "your cynical definitions are unworthy that masculine beard. You despise fame! what sheer affectation!

"Pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat; metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis ———."

"Take care," cried Vance; "we shall be over." For

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Lionel, growing excited, teased the horse with his whip; and the horse bolting, took the cab within an inch of a water-cart.

"Fame, Fame!" cried Lionel, unheeding the interruption. "What would I not give to have and to hold it for an hour!"

"Hold an eel, less slippery; a scorpion, less stinging! But—" added Vance, observing his companion's heightened color. "But," he added seriously, and with an honest compunction, "I forgot, you are a soldier, you follow the career of arms! Never heed what is said on the subject by a querulous painter! The desire of fame may be folly in civilians, in soldiers it is wisdom. Twin-born with the martial sense of honor, it cheers the march, it warms the bivouac; it gives music to the whirr of the bullet, the roar of the ball; it plants hope in the thick of peril; knits rivals with the bond of brothers; comforts the survivor when the brother falls; takes from war its grim aspect of carnage; and from homicide itself extracts lessons that strengthen the safeguards to humanity, and perpetuate life to nations. Right — pant for fame; you are a soldier!"

This was one of those bursts of high sentiment from Vance, which, as they were very rare with him, had the dramatic effect of surprise. Lionel listened to him with a thrilling delight. He could not answer, he was too moved. The artist resumed, as the cabriolet now cleared the Park, and rolled safely and rapidly along the road. "I suppose, during the five years you have spent abroad, completing

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your general education, you have made little study, or none, of what specially appertains to the profession you have so recently chosen."

"You are mistaken there, my dear Vance. If a man's heart be set on a thing, he is always studying it. The books I loved best, and most pondered over, were such as, if they did not administer lessons, suggested hints that might turn to lessons hereafter. In social intercourse, I never was so pleased as when I could fasten myself to some practical veteran—question and cross-examine him. One picks up more ideas in conversation than from books; at least I do. Besides, my idea of a soldier who is to succeed some day, is not that of a mere mechanician at arms. See how accomplished most great captains have been. What observers of mankind!—What diplomatists—what reasoners! what men of action, because men to whom reflection had been habitual before they acted! How many stores of ideas must have gone to the judgment which hazards the sortie, or decides on the retreat!"

"Gently, gently!" cried Vance. "We shall be into that omnibus! Give me the whip—do; there—a little more to the left—so. Yes; I am glad to see such enthusiasm in your profession—'tis half the battle. Hazlitt said a capital thing, 'the 'prentice who does not consider the Lord Mayor in his gilt coach the greatest man in the world will live to be hanged!'"

"Pish!" said Lionel catching at the whip.

VANCE (holding it back). "No. I apologize instead.

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I retract the Lord Mayor; comparisons are odious. I agree with you, nothing like leather — I mean nothing like a really great soldier — Hannibal, and so forth. Cherish that conviction, my boy; meanwhile, respect human life — there is another omnibus!"

The danger past, the artist thought it prudent to divert the conversation into some channel less exciting.

"Mr. Darrell, of course, consents to your choice of a profession?"

"Consents — approves, encourages. Wrote me such a beautiful letter — what a comprehensive intelligence that man has!"

"Necessarily; since he agrees with you. Where is he now?"

"I have no notion; it is some months since I heard from him. He was then at Malta, on his return from Asia Minor."

"So! you have never seen him since he bade you farewell at his old Manor-House?"

"Never. He has not, I believe, been in England."

"Nor in Paris, where you seem to have chiefly resided?"

"Nor in Paris. Ah, Vance, could I but be of some comfort to him! Now that I am older, I think I understand in him much that perplexed me as a boy, when we parted. Darrell is one of those men who require a home. Between the great world and solitude, he needs the intermediate filling up which the life domestic alone supplies: a wife to realize the sweet word helpmate—children, with whose future he could knit his own toils and his ancestral

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remembrances. That intermediate space annihilated, the great world and the solitude are left, each frowning on the other.

"My dear Lionel, you must have lived with very clever people; you are talking far above your years."

"Am I? True, I have lived, if not with very clever people, with people far above my years. That is a secret I learned from Colonel Morley, to whom I must present you — the subtlest intellect under the quietest manner. Once he said to me, 'Would you throughout life be up to the height of your century — always in the prime of man's reason — without crudeness and without decline — live habitually, while young, with persons older, and, when old, with persons younger than yourself.'"

"Shrewdly said, indeed. I felicitate you on the evident result of the maxim. And so Darrell has no home; no wife, and no children?"

"He has long been a widower; he lost his only son in boyhood, and his daughter — did you never hear?"

"No — what — ?"

"Married so ill — a runaway match — and died many years since, without issue."

"Poor man! It was these afflictions, then, that soured his life, and made him the hermit or the wanderer?"

"There," said Lionel, "I am puzzled; for I find that even after his son's death and his daughter's unhappy marriage and estrangement from him, he was still in Parliament, and in full activity of career. But certainly he did not long keep it up. It might have been an effort

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to which, strong as he is, he felt himself unequal; or, might he have known some fresh disappointment, some new sorrow which the world never guesses? what I have said as to his family afflictions the world knows. But I think he will marry again. That idea seemed strong in his own mind when we parted; he brought it out bluntly, roughly. Colonel Morley is convinced that he will marry, if but for the sake of an heir."

VANCE. "And if so, my poor Lionel, you are ousted of—"

LIONEL (quickly interrupting). "Hush! Do not say, my dear Vance, do not *you* say — you! — one of those low, mean things which, if said to me even by men for whom I have no esteem, make my ears tingle and my cheek blush. When I think of what Darrell has already done for me — me who have no claim on him — it seems to me as if I must hate the man who insinuates, 'Fear lest your benefactor find a smile at his own hearth, a child of his own blood — for you may be richer at his death in proportion as his life is desolate."

VANCE. "You are a fine young fellow, and I beg your pardon. Take care of that milestone — thank you. But I suspect that at least two-thirds of those friendly hands that detained you on the way to me, were stretched out less to Lionel Haughton—a Cornet in the Guards—than to Mr. Darrell's heir-presumptive."

LIONEL "That thought sometimes galls me, but it does me good; for it goads on my desire to make myself some one whom the most worldly would not disdain to know

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for his own sake. Oh for active service! — Oh for a sharp campaign! — Oh for fair trial how far a man in earnest can grapple Fortune to his breast with his own strong hands! You have done so, Vance; you had but your genius and your painter's brush. I have no genius, but I have resolve, and resolve is perhaps as sure of its ends as genius. Genius and Resolve have three grand elements in common — Patience, Hope, Concentration."

Vance, more and more surprised, looked hard at Lionel, without speaking. Five years of that critical age, from seventeen to twenty-two, spent in the great capital of Europe — kept from its more dangerous vices partly by a proud sense of personal dignity, partly by a temperament which, regarding love as an ideal for all tender and sublime emotion, recoiled from low profligacy as being to Love what the Yahoo of the mocking satirist was to Man — absorbed much by the brooding ambition that takes youth out of the frivolous present into the serious future, and seeking companionship, not with contemporary idlers, but with the highest and maturist intellects that the free commonwealth of good society brought within his reach — five years so spent had developed a boy, nursing noble dreams, into a man fit for noble action — retaining freshest youth in its enthusiasm, its elevation of sentiment, its daring, its energy, and divine credulity in its own unexhausted resources; but borrowing from maturity compactness and solidity of idea — the link between speculation and practice — the power to impress on others a sense of the superiority which has been self-elaborated by unconscious culture.

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"So!" said Vance, after a prolonged pause, "I don't know whether I have resolve or genius; but, certainly, if I have made my way to some small reputation, patience, hope, and concentration of purpose must have the credit of it; and prudence, too, which you have forgotten to name, and certainly don't evince as a charioteer. I hope, my dear fellow, you are not extravagant. No debts, eh? — why do you laugh?"

"The question is so like you, Frank—thrifty as ever."

"Do you think I could have painted with a calm mind, if I knew that at my door there was a dun whom I could not pay? Art needs serenity; and if an artist begin his career with as few shirts to his back as I had, he must place economy among the rules of perspective."

Lionel laughed again, and made some comments on economy which were certainly, if smart, rather flippant, and tended not only to lower the favorable estimate of his intellectual improvement which Vance had just formed, but seriously disquieted the kindly artist. Vance knew the world — knew the peculiar temptations to which a young man in Lionel's position would be exposed — knew that contempt for economy belongs to that school of Peripatetics which reserves its last lessons for finished disciples in the sacred walks of the Queen's Bench.

However, that was no auspicious moment for didactic warnings.

"Here we are!" cried Lionel — "Putney Bridge."

They reached the little inn by the river-side, and while

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dinner was getting ready, they hired a boat. Vance took the oars.

VANCE. "Not so pretty here as by those green quiet banks along which we glided, at moonlight, five years ago."

LIONEL. "Ah, no. And that innocent, charming child, whose portrait you took — you have never heard of her since!"

VANCE. "Never! How should I? Have you?"

LIONEL. "Only what Darrell repeated to me. His lawyer had ascertained that she and her grandfather had gone to America. Darrell gently implied that, from what he learned of them, they scarcely merited the interest I felt in their fate. But we were not deceived — were we, Vance?"

VANCE. "No; the little girl — what was her name? Sukey? Sally? — Sophy — true, Sophy — had something about her extremely prepossessing, besides her pretty face; and, in spite of that horrid cotton print, I shall never forget it."

LIONEL. "Her face! Nor I. I see it still before me."

VANCE. "Her cotton print! I see it still before me! But I must not be ungrateful. Would not believe it, that little portrait, which cost me three pounds, has made, I don't say my fortune, but my fashion?"

LIONEL. "How! You had the heart to sell it?"

VANCE. "No; I kept it as a study for young female heads — 'with variations,' as they say in music. It was by my female heads that I become the fashion; every

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order I have contains the condition — 'But be sure, one of your sweet female heads, Mr. Vance.' My female heads are as necessaay to my canvas as a white horse to Wouvermans'. Well, that child, who cost me three pounds, is the original of them all. Commencing as a Titania, she has been in turns a 'Psyche,' a 'Beatrice Cence,' a 'Minna,' 'A Portrait of a Nobleman's Daughter,' 'Burns's Mary in Heaven,' 'The Young Gleaner,' and 'Sabrina fair,' in Milton's *Comus*. I have led that child through all history, sacred and profane. I have painted her in all costumes (her own cotton print excepted). My female heads are my glory — even the *Times'* critic allows *that!* 'Mr. Vance, *there*, is inimitable! a type of childlike grace peculiarly his own, etc., etc.' I'll lend you the article."

LIONEL. "And shall we never again see the original darling Sophy? You will laugh, Vance, but I have been heart-proof against all young ladies. If ever I marry, my wife must have Sophy's eyes? In America!"

VANCE. "Let us hope by this time happily married to a Yankee! Yankees marry girls in their teens, and don't ask for dowries. Married to a Yankee! not a doubt of it! a Yankee who chaws, whittles, and keeps a 'store!'"

LIONEL. "Monster! Hold your tongue! *Apropos* of marriage, why are you still single?"

VANCE. "Because I have no wish to be doubled up! Moreover, man is like a napkin, the more neatly the housewife doubles him, the more carefully she lays him on the shelf. Neither can a man once doubled know

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how often he may be doubled. Not only his wife folds him in two, but every child quarters him into a new double, till what was a wide and handsome substance, large enough for any thing in reason, dwindles into a pitiful square that will not cover one platter — all puckers and creases — smaller and smaller with every double — with every double a new crease. Then, my friend, comes the washing bill! and, besides all the hurts one receives in the mangle, consider the hourly wear and tear of the linen-press! In short, Shakspeare vindicates the single life, and depicts the double in the famous line — which is no doubt intended to be allegorical of marriage —

'Double, double, toil and trouble.'

Besides, no single man can be fairly called poor. What double man can with certainty be called rich? A single man can lodge in a garret, and dine on a herring; nobody knows, nobody cares. Let him marry, and he invites the world to witness where he lodges, and how he dines. The first necessary a wife demands is the most ruinous, the most indefinite superfluity; it is Gentility according to what her neighbors call genteel. Gentility commences with the honey-moon; it is its shadow, and lengthens as the moon declines. When the honey is all gone, your bride says, 'We can have our tea without sugar when quite alone, love; but in case Gentility drop in, here's a bill for silver sugar-tongs!' That's why I'm single."

"Economy again, Vance."

"Prudence—dignity," answered Vance seriously; and sinking into a reverie that seemed gloomy, he shot back to shore.

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CHAPTER III.

Mr. Vance explains how he came to grind colors and save half pence. — A sudden announcement.

THE meal was over — the table had been spread by a window that looked upon the river. The moon was up; the young men asked for no other lights; conversation between them — often shifting, often pausing — had gradually become grave, as it usually does, with two companions in youth; while yet long vistas in the Future stretch before them deep in shadow, and they fall into confiding talk on what they wish — what they fear; making visionary maps in that limitless Obscure.

"There is so much power in faith," said Lionel, "even when faith is applied but to things human and earthly, that let a man be but firmly persuaded that he is born to do, some day, what at the moment seems impossible, and it is fifty to one but what he does it before he dies. Surely, when you were a child at school, you felt convinced that there was something in your fate distinct from that of the other boys — whom the master might call quite as clever — felt that faith in yourself which made you sure that you would be one day what you are."

"Well, I suppose so; but vague aspirations and self-conceits must be bound together by some practical necessity — perhaps a very homely and a very vulgar one — or

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they scatter and evaporate. One would think that rich people in high life ought to do more than poor folks in humble life. More pains are taken with their education; they have more leisure for following the bent of their genius; yet it is the poor folks, often half self-educated, and with pinched bellies, that do three-fourths of the world's grand labor. Poverty is the keenest stimulant, and poverty made me not say, 'I *will* do,' but 'I *must*.'"

"You knew real poverty in childhood, Frank?"

"Real poverty, covered over with sham affluence. My father was Genteel Poverty, and my mother was Poor Gentility. The sham affluence went when my father died. The real poverty then came out in all its ugliness. I was taken from a genteel school, at which, long afterward, I genteelly paid the bills; and I had to support my mother somehow or other—somehow or other I succeeded. Alas, I fear not genteelly! But before I lost her, which I did in a few years, she had some comforts which were not appearances; and she kindly allowed, dear soul, that gentility and shams do not go well together. Oh! beware of debt, *Lionello mio;* and never call that economy meanness which is but the safeguard from mean degradation."

"I understand you at last, Vance; shake hands; I know why you are saving."

"Habit now," answered Vance, repressing praise of himself, as usual. "But I remember so well when twopence was a sum to be respected, that to this day I would rather put it by than spend it. All our ideas, like orange-

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plants, spread out in proportion to the size of the box which imprisons the roots. Then I had a sister." Vance paused a moment as if in pain, but went on with seeming carelessness, leaning over the window-sill, and turning his face from his friend. "I had a sister older than myself, handsome, gentle. I was so proud of her! Foolish girl! my love was not enough for her. Foolish girl! she could not wait to see what I might live to do for her. She married — oh! so genteelly! — a young man, very well born, who had wooed her before my father died. He had the villany to remain constant when she had not a farthing, and he was dependent on distant relations and his own domains in Parnassus. The wretch was a poet! So they married. They spent their honey-moon genteelly, I dare say. His relations cut him. Parnassus paid no rents. He went abroad. Such heart-rending letters from her! They were destitute. How I worked! how I raged! But how could I maintain her and her husband too, mere child that I was? No matter. They are dead now, both; all dead for whose sake I first ground colors and saved half-pence. And Frank Vance is a stingy, selfish bachelor. Never revive this dull subject again, or I shall borrow a crown from you, and cut you dead. Waiter, ho! — the bill. I'll just go round to the stables, and see the horse put to."

As the friends re-entered London, Vance said, "Put me down any where in Piccadilly; I will walk home. You, I suppose, of course, are staying with your mother in Gloucester Place?"

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"No," said Lionel, rather embarrassed; "Colonel Morley, who acts for me as if he were my guardian, took a lodging for me in Chesterfield Street, Mayfair. My hours, I fear, would ill suit my dear mother. Only in town two days; and, thanks to Morley, my table is already covered with invitations."

"Yet you gave me one day, generous friend!"

"You the second day—my mother the first. But there are three balls before me to-night. Come home with me, and smoke your cigar while I dress."

"No; but I will at least light my cigar in your hall—prodigal!"

Lionel now stopped at his lodging. The groom, who served him also as valet, was in waiting at the door. "A note for you, Sir, from Colonel Morley—just come." Lionel hastily opened it, and read:

"My dear Haughton,—Mr. Darrell has suddenly arrived in London. Keep yourself free all to-morrow, when, no doubt, he will see you. I am hurrying off to him. Yours in haste, A. V. M."

CHAPTER IV.

Once more Guy Darrell.

Guy Darrell was alone. A lofty room in a large house, on the first floor. His own house in Carlton Gardens, which he had occupied during his brief and brilliant parliamentary career; since then, left contempt-

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uously to the care of a house-agent, to be let by year or by season, it had known various tenants of an opulence and station suitable to its space and site. Dinners and concerts, routes and balls, had assembled the friends and jaded the spirits of many a gracious host and smiling hostess. The tenure of one of these temporary occupants had recently expired, and ere the agent had found another the long-absent owner dropped down into its silenced halls as from the clouds, without other establishment than his old servant Mills and the woman in charge of the house. There, as in a caravanserai, the traveler took his rest, stately and desolate. Nothing so comfortless as one of those large London houses all to one's self. In long rows against the walls stood the empty *fauteuils*. Spectral from the gilded ceiling hung lightless chandeliers. The furniture, pompous, but worn by use and faded by time, seemed mementoes of departed revels. When you return to your own house in the country — no matter how long the absence — no matter how decayed by neglect the friendly chambers may be — if it has only been deserted in the mean while (not let to new races, who, by their own shifting dynasties, have supplanted the rightful lord, and half-effaced his memorials), the walls may still greet you forgivingly, the character of *Home* be still there. You take up again the thread of associations which had been suspended, not snapped. But it is otherwise with a house in cities, especially in our fast-living London, where few houses descend from father to son — where the title-deeds are rarely more than those of

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a purchased lease for a term of years, after which your property quits you. A house in London which your father never entered, in which no elbow-chair, no old-fashioned work-table, recalls to you the kind smile of a mother — a house that you have left as you leave an inn, let to people whose names you scarce know, with as little respect for your family records as you have for theirs. When you return after a long interval of years to a house like that, you stand as stood Darrell — a forlorn stranger under your own roof-tree. What cared he for those who had last gathered round those hearths with their chill, steely grates — whose forms had reclined on those formal couches — whose feet had worn away the gloss from those costly carpets? Histories in the lives of many might be recorded within those walls. Lovers there had breathed their first vows; bridal feasts had been held; babes had crowed in the arms of proud young mothers; politicians there had been raised into ministers; ministers there had fallen back into "independent members;" through those doors corpses had been borne forth to relentless vaults. For these races and their records what cared the owner? Their writing was not on the walls. Sponged out as from a slate, their reckonings with time, leaving dim, here and there, some chance scratch of his own, blurred and by-gone. Leaning against the mantle-piece, Darrell gazed round the room with a vague, wistful look, as if seeking to conjure up associations that might link the present hour to that past life which had slipped away elsewhere; and his profile, reflecting on the mirror behind,

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pale and mournful, seemed like that ghost of himself which his memory silently evoked.

The man is but little altered externally since we saw him last, however inly changed since he last stood on those unwelcoming floors; the form still retained the same vigor and symmetry — the same unspeakable dignity of mien and bearing — the same thoughtful bend of the proud neck — so distinct, in its elastic rebound, from the stoop of debility or age. Thick as ever the rich mass of dark brown hair, though, when in the impatience of some painful thought, his hand swept the loose curls from his forehead, the silver threads might now be seen shooting here and there — vanishing almost as soon as seen. No, whatever the baptismal register may say to the contrary, that man is not old — not even elderly; in the deep of that clear gray eye light may be calm, but in calm it is vivid; not a ray, sent from brain or from heart, is yet flickering down. On the whole, however, there is less composure than of old in his mien and bearing — less of that resignation which seemed to say, "I have done with the substances of life." Still there was gloom, but it was more broken and restless. Evidently that human breast was again admitting, or forcing itself to court, human hopes, human objects. Returning to the substances of life, their movement was seen in the shadows which, when they wrap us round at remoter distance, seem to lose their trouble as they gain their width. He broke from his musing attitude with an abrupt, angry movement, as if shaking off thoughts which displeased him, and gathering

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his arms tightly to his breast, in a gesture peculiar to himself, walked to and fro the room, murmuring inaudibly. The door opened; he turned quickly, and with an evident sense of relief, for his face brightened. "Alban, my dear Alban!"

"Darrell — old friend — old school-friend — dear, dear Guy Darrell!" The two Englishmen stood, hands tightly clasped in each other, in true English greeting — their eyes moistening with remembrances that carried them back to boyhood.

Alban was the first to recover self-possession; and when the friends had seated themselves, he surveyed Darrell's countenance deliberately, and said: "So little change! — wonderful! What is your secret?"

"Suspense from life — hybernating. But you beat me; you have been spending life, yet seem as rich in it as when we parted."

"No; I begin to decry the present and laud the past — to read with glasses, to decide from prejudice, to recoil from change, to find sense in twaddle—to know the value of health from the fear to lose it — feel an interest in rheumatism, an awe of bronchitis — to tell anecdotes and to wear flannel. To you in strict confidence I disclose the truth — I am no longer twenty-five. You laugh — this is civilized talk; does it not refresh you after the gibberish you must have chattered in Asia Minor?"

Darrell might have answered in the affirmative with truth. What man, after long years of solitude, is not refreshed by talk, however trivial, that recalls to him the

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gay time of the world he remembered in his young day—and recalls it to him on the lips of a friend in youth! But Darrell said nothing; only he settled himself in his chair with a more cheerful ease, and inclined his relaxing brows with a nod of encouragement or assent.

Colonel Morley continued. "But when did you arrive? whence? How long do you stay here? What are your plans?"

DARRELL. "Cæsar could not be more laconic. When arrived?—this evening. Whence?—Ouzelford. How long do I stay?—uncertain. What are my plans?—let us discuss them."

COLONEL MORLEY. "With all my heart. You have plans, then?—a good sign. Animals in hybernation form none."

DARRELL (Putting aside the lights on the table, so as to leave his face in shade, and looking toward the floor as he speaks). "For the last five years I have struggled hard to renew interest in mankind, reconnect myself with common life and its healthful objects. Between Fawley and London I desired to form a magnetic medium. I took rather a vast one—nearly all the rest of the known world. I have visited both Americas—either Ind. All Asia have I ransacked, and pierced as far into Africa as traveller ever went in search of Timbuctoo. But I have sojourned also, at long intervals—at least they seemed long to me—in the gay capitals of Europe (Paris excepted); mixed, too, with the gayest—hired palaces filled them with guests—feasted and heard music. 'Guy

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Darrell,' said I, 'shake off the rust of years—thou hadst no youth while young. Be young now. A holiday may restore thee to wholesome work, as a holiday restores the wearied school-boy.'"

COLONEL MORLEY. "I comprehend; the experiment succeeded?"

DARRELL. "I don't know—not yet—but it may; I am here, and I intend to stay. I would not go to a hotel for a single day, lest my resolution should fail me. I have thrown myself into this castle of care without even a garrison. I hope to hold it. Help me to man it. In a word, and without metaphor, I am here with the design of re-entering London life."

COLONEL MORLEY. "I am so glad. Hearty congratulations! How rejoiced all the Viponts will be! Another 'CRISIS' is at hand. You have seen the newspapers regularly, of course — the state of the country interests you. You say that you come from Ouzelford, the town you once represented. I guess you will re-enter Parliament; you have but to say the word."

DARRELL. "Parliament! No. I received, while abroad, so earnest a request from my old constituents to lay the foundation-stone of a new Town-hall, in which they are much interested, and my obligations to them have been so great, that I could not refuse. I wrote to fix the day as soon as I had resolved to return to England, making a condition that I should be spared the infliction of a public dinner, and landed just in time to keep my appointment—reached Ouzelford early this morning, went through

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the ceremony; made a short speech, came on at once to London, not venturing to diverge to Fawley (which is not very far from Ouzelford), lest, once there again, I should not have strength to leave it — and here I am." Darrell paused, then repeated, in brisk, emphatic tone: "Parliament? No. Labor? No. Fellow-man, I am about to confess to you; I would snatch back some days of youth—a wintry likeness of youth—better than none. Old friend, let us amuse ourselves! When I was working hard—hard—hard—it was you who would say: 'Come forth, be amused'—you happy butterfly that you were! Now, I say to you: 'Show me this flaunting town that you know so well; initiate me into the joy of polite pleasures, social commune —

'Dulce mihi furere est amico.'

You have amusements — let me share them."

"Faith," quoth the Colonel, crossing his legs, "you come late in the day! Amusements cease to amuse at last. I have tried all, and begin to be tired. I have had my holiday, exhausted its sports; and you, coming from books and desk fresh into the playground, say, 'Football and leapfrog.' Alas! my poor friend, why did not you come sooner?"

DARRELL. "One word, one question. You have made EASE a philosophy and a system; no man ever did so with more felicitous grace; nor, in following pleasure, have you parted company with conscience and shame. A fine gentleman ever, in honor as in elegance. Well, are

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you satisfied with your choice of life? Are you happy?"

"Happy — who is? Satisfied — perhaps!"

"Is there any one you envy—whose choice, other than your own, you would prefer?"

"Certainly."

"Who?"

"You."

"I!" said Darrell, opening his eyes with unaffected amaze. "I! envy me! prefer my choice!"

COLONEL MORLEY (peevishly). "Without doubt. You have had gratified ambition—a great career. Envy you! who would not? Your own objects in life fulfilled; you coveted distinction — you won it; fortune — your wealth is immense; the restoration of your name and lineage from obscurity and humiliation—are not name and lineage again written in the *Libro d'oro*? What king would not hail you as his councillor? what senate not open its ranks to admit you as a chief? what house, though the haughtiest in the land, would not accept your alliance? And withal, you stand before me stalwart and unbowed, young blood still in your veins. Ungrateful man! who would not change lots with Guy Darrell? Fame, fortune, health, and, not to flatter you, a form and presence that would be remarked, though you stood in that black frock by the side of a monarch in his coronation robes."

DARRELL. "You have turned my questions against myself with a kindliness of intention that makes me forgive your belief in my vanity. Pass on—or rather pass back; you say you have tried all in life that distracts or

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sweetens. Not so; lone bachelor, you have not tried wedlock. Has not that been your mistake?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Answer for yourself. You have tried it." The words were scarce out of his mouth ere he repented the retort. For Darrell started as if stung to the quick; and his brow, before serene, his lip, before playful, grew, the one darkly troubled, the other tightly compressed. "Pardon me," faltered out the friend.

DARRELL. "Oh yes; I brought it on myself. What stuff we have been talking! Tell me the news — not political — any other. But first, your report of young Haughton. Cordial thanks for all your kindness to him. You write me word that he is much improved — most likeable; you add that at Paris he became the rage — that in London you are sure he will be extremely popular. Be it so, if for his own sake. Are you quite sure that it is not for the expectations which I come here to dissipate?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Much for himself, I am certain; a little, perhaps, because, whatever he thinks and I say to the contrary — people seeing no other heir to your property — "

"I understand," interrupted Darrell, quickly. "But he does not nurse those expectations? he will not be disappointed?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Verily I believe that, apart from his love for you, and a delicacy of sentiment that would recoil from planting hopes of wealth in the graves of benefactors, Lionel Haughton would prefer carving his

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own fortunes to all the ingots hewed out of California by another's hand, and bequeathed by another's will."

"I am heartily glad to hear and to trust you."

"I gather from what you say that you are here with the intention to — to —"

"Marry again," said Darrell, firmly. "Right. I am."

"I always felt sure you would marry again. Is the lady here, too?"

"What lady?"

"The lady you have chosen?"

"Tush — I have chosen none. I come here to choose; and in this I ask advice from your experience. I would marry again! I — at my age! Ridiculous! But so it is. You know all the mothers and marriageable daughters that London—*arida nutrix*—rears for nuptial altars —where, among them, shall I, Guy Darrell, the man whom you think so enviable, find the safe helpmate whose love he may reward with munificent jointure, to whose child he may bequeath the name that has now no successor, and the wealth he has no heart to spend?"

Colonel Morley — who, as we know, is by habit a match-maker, and likes the vocation — assumes a placid but cogitative mien, rubs his brow gently, and says, in his softest, best-bred accents, "You would not marry a mere girl? some one of suitable age? I know several most superior young women on the other side of thirty — Wilhelmina Prymme, for instance, or Janet —"

DARRELL. "Old maids. No — decidedly no!"

COLONEL MORLEY (suspiciously). "But you would not

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risk the peace of your old age with a girl of eighteen, or else I do know a very accomplished, well-brought up girl; just eighteen — who — "

DARRELL. "Re-enter life by the side of Eighteen! Am I a madman?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Neither old maids, nor young maids; the choice becomes narrowed. You would prefer a widow. Ha! I have thought of one! a prize, indeed, could you but win her — the widow of — "

DARRELL. "Ephesus! Bah! suggest no widow to me. A widow, with her affections buried in the grave!"

MORLEY. "Not necessarily. And in this case — "

DARRELL (interrupting, and with warmth). "In every case, I tell you, no widow shall doff her weeds for me. Did she love the first man? fickle is the woman who can love twice. Did she not love him? why did she marry him? perhaps she sold herself to a rent-roll? Shall she sell herself again to me, for a jointure? Heaven forbid! Talk not of widows. No dainty so flavorless as a heart warmed up again."

COLONEL MORLEY. "Neither maids, be they old or young, nor widows. Possibly you want an angel. London is not the place for angels."

DARRELL. "I grant that the choice seems involved in perplexity. How can it be otherwise, if one's self is perplexed? And yet, Alban, I am serious; and I do not presume to be so exacting as my words have implied. I ask not fortune, nor rank beyond gentle blood, nor youth, nor beauty, nor accomplishments, nor fashion; but I do ask one thing, and one thing only."

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"What is that? you have left nothing worth the having to ask for."

"Nothing! I have left all. I ask some one whom I can love — love better than all the world — not the *mariage de convenance*, not the *mariage de raison*, but the *mariage d'amour*. All other marriage, with vows of love so solemn, with intimacy of commune so close — all other marriage, in my eyes, is an acted falsehood — a varnished sin. Ah! if I had thought so always! But away, regret and repentance! The Future alone is now before me. Alban Morley, I would sign away all I have in the world (save the old house at Fawley), ay, and after signing, cut off, to boot, this right hand, could I but once fall in love; love, and be loved again, as any two of Heaven's simplest human creatures may love each other while life is fresh! Strange, strange — look out into the world; mark the man of our years who shall be most courted, most adulated, or admired. Give him all the attributes of power, wealth, royalty, genius, fame. See all the younger generations bow before him with hope or awe; his word can make their fortune; at his smile a reputation dawns. Well; now let that man say to the young, 'Room among yourselves — all that wins me this homage I would lay at the feet of Beauty. I enter the lists of love,' and straightway his power vanishes, the poorest booby of twenty-four can jostle him aside; before the object of reverence he is now the butt of ridicule. The instant he asks right to win the heart of woman, a boy whom, in all else, he could rule as a lackey, cries, 'Off, Gray-beard! *that* realm at least is mine!'"

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"This were but eloquent extravagance, even if your beard were gray. Men older than you, and with half your pretensions, even of outward form, have carried away hearts from boys like Adonis. Only choose well; that's the difficulty — if it was not difficult who would be a bachelor!"

"Guide my choice. Pilot me to the haven."

"Accepted! But you must remount a suitable establishment; re-open your way to the great world, and penetrate those sacred recesses where awaiting spinisters weave the fatal web. Leave all to me. Let Mills (I see you have him still) call on me to-morrow about your *ménage*. You will give dinners, of course?"

"Oh, of course. Must I dine at them myself?"

Morley laughed softly, and took up his hat.

"So soon," cried Darrell. "If I fatigue you already, what chance shall I have with new friends?"

"So soon! it is past eleven. And it is you who must be fatigued."

"No such good luck; were I fatigued, I might hope to sleep. I will walk back with you. Leave me not alone in this room — alone in the jaws of a Fish; swallowed up by a creature whose blood is cold."

"You have something still to say to me," said Alban, when they were in the open air; "I detect it in your manner — what is it?"

"I know not. But you have told me no news; these streets are grown strange to me. "Who live now in yonder houses? once the dwellers were my friends."

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"In that house — oh, new people; I forget their names — but rich — in a year or two, with luck, they may be exclusives, and forget *my* name. In the other house, Carr Vipont, still."

"Vipont; those dear Viponts! what of them all? crawl they? sting they? Bask they in the sun? or are they in anxious process of a change of skin?"

"Hush, my dear friend; no satire on your own connections; nothing so injudicious. I am a Vipont, too, and all for the family maxim — 'Vipont with Vipont, and come what may!'"

"I stand rebuked. But I am no Vipont. I married, it is true, into their house, and they married, ages ago, into mine; but no drop in the blood of time-servers flows through the veins of the last childless Darrell. Pardon. I allow the merit of the Vipont race; no family more excites my respectful interest. What of their births, deaths, and marriages?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "As to births, Carr has just welcomed the birth of a grandson; the first-born of his eldest son (who married last year a daughter of the Duke of Halifax) — a promising young man, a Lord in the Admiralty. Carr has a second son in the —— Hussars; has just purchased his step: the other boys are still at school. He has three daughters too, fine girls, admirable brought up; indeed, now I think of it, the eldest, Honoria, might suit you; highly accomplished — well read, interests herself in politics — a great admirer of intellect — of a very serious turn of mind, too."

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DARRELL. "A female politician with a serious turn of mind — a farthing rushlight in a London fog! Hasten on to subjects less gloomy. Whose funeral Achievement is that yonder?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "The late Lord Niton's, father to Lady Montfort."

DARRELL. "Lady Montfort! Her father was a Lyndsay, and died before the Flood. A deluge, at least, has gone over me and my world since I looked on the face of his widow."

COLONEL MORLEY. "I speak of the present Lord Montfort's wife — the Earl's. You of the poor Marquis's — the last Marquis — the marquisate is extinct. Surely, whatever your wanderings, you must have heard of the death of the last Marquis of Montfort?"

"Yes, I heard of that," answered Darrell, in a somewhat husky and muttered voice. "So he is dead, the young man! — What killed him?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "A violent attack of croup — quite sudden. He was staying at Carr's at the time. I suspect that Carr made him talk! a thing he was not accustomed to do: deranged his system altogether. But don't let us revive painful subjects."

DARRELL. "Was she with him at the time?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Lady Montfort?—No; they were very seldom together."

DARRELL. "She is not married again yet?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "No, but still young, and so beautiful, she will have many offers. I know those who are

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waiting to propose. Montfort has been only dead eighteen months — died just before young Carr's marriage. His widow lives, in complete seclusion, at her jointure-house near Twickenham. She has only seen even me once since her loss."

DARRELL. "When was that?"

MORLEY. "About six or seven months ago; she asked after you with much interest."

DARRELL. "After me!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "To be sure. Don't I remember how constantly she and her mother were at your house? Is it strange that she should ask after you? You ought to know her better — the most affectionate, grateful character."

DARRELL. "I dare say. But at the time you refer to I was too occupied to acquire much accurate knowledge of a young lady's character. I should have known her mother's character better, yet I mistook even that."

COLONEL MORLEY. "Mrs. Lyndsay's character you might well mistake—charming but artificial: Lady Montfort is natural. Indeed, if you had not that liberal prejudice against widows, she was the very person I was about to suggest to you."

DARRELL. "A fashionable beauty, and young enough to be my daughter! Such is human friendship! So the marquisate is extinct, and Sir James Vipont, whom I remember in the House of Commons — respectable man — great authority on cattle—timid, and always saying: '*Did* you read that article in to-day's paper?' — has the estates and the earldom."

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COLONEL MORLEY. "Yes. There was some fear of a disputed succession, but Sir James made his claim very clear. Between you and me, the change has been a serious affliction to the Viponts. The late Lord was not wise, but on State occasions he looked his part — *tres Grand Seigneur* — and Carr managed the family influence with admirable tact. The present Lord has the habits of a yeoman; his wife shares his tastes. He has taken the management not only of the property, but of its influence, out of Carr's hands, and will make a sad mess of it, for he is an impracticable, obsolete politician. He will never keep the family together — impossible — a sad thing. I remember how our last muster, five years ago next Christmas, struck terror into Lord ——'s Cabinet; the mere report of it in the newspapers set all people talking and thinking. The result was, that, two weeks after, proper overtures were made to Carr — he consented to assist the Ministers—and the Country was saved! Now, thanks to this stupid new Earl, in eighteen months we have lost ground which it took at least a century and a half to gain. Our votes are divided, our influence frittered away; Montfort House is shut up, and Carr, grown quite thin, says that, in the coming 'CRISIS' a Cabinet will not only be formed, but will also last — last time enough for irreparable mischief — without a single Vipont in office."

Thus Colonel Morley continued in mournful strain, Darrell silent by his side, till the Colonel reached his own door. There, while applying his latch-key to the lock, Alban's mind returned from the perils that threatened the

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House of Vipont and the Star of Brunswick to the petty claims of private friendship. But even these last were now blended with those grander interests, due care for which every true patriot of the House of Vipont imbibed with his mother's milk.

"Your appearance in town, my dear Darrell, is most opportune. It will be an object with the whole family to make the most of you at this coming 'CRISIS'—I say coming, for I believe it must come. Your name is still freshly remembered—your position greater for having been out of all the scrapes of the party the last sixteen or seventeen years; your house should be the nucleus of new combinations. Don't forget to send Mills to me; I will engage your *chef* and your house-steward to-morrow. I know just the men to suit you. Your intention to marry, too, just at this moment, is most seasonable; it will increase the family interest. I may give out that you intend to marry?"

"Oh, certainly—cry it at Charing Cross."

"A club-room will do as well. I beg ten thousand pardons; but people will talk about money whenever they talk about marriage. I should not like to exaggerate your fortune—I know it must be very large, and all at your own disposal—eh?"

"Every shilling."

"You must have saved a great deal since you retired into private life?"

"Take that for granted. Dick Fairthorn receives my rents, and looks to my various investments; and I take

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him as my indisputable authority when I say that, what with the rental of lands I purchased in my poor boy's lifetime, and the interest on my much more lucrative moneyed capital, you may safely whisper to all ladies likely to feel interest in that diffusion of knowledge: 'Thirty-five thousand a-year, and an old fool.'"

"I certainly shall not say an old fool, for I am the same age as yourself; and if I had £35,000 a-year I would marry too."

"You would! Old fool!" said Darrell, turning away.

CHAPTER V.

Revealing glimpses of Guy Darrell's past in his envied prime. Dig but deep enough, and under all earth runs water, under all life runs grief.

ALONE in the streets, the vivacity which had characterized Darrell's countenance as well as his words, while with his old school friend, changed as suddenly and as completely into pensive abstracted gloom as if he had been acting a part, and with the exit the acting ceased. Disinclined to return yet to the solitude of his home, he walked on, at first mechanically, in the restless desire of movement, he cared not whither. But, as thus chanceled, he found himself in the center of that long straight thoroughfare which connects what once were the separate villages of Tyburn and Holborn, something in the desul-

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tory links of reverie suggested an object to his devious feet. He had but to follow that street to his right hand to gain, in a quarter of an hour, a sight of the humble dwelling-house in which he had first settled down, after his early marriage, to the arid labors of the bar. He would go, now that, wealthy and renowned, he was revisiting the long deserted focus of English energies, and contemplate the obscure abode in which his powers had been first concentred on the pursuit of renown and wealth. Who among my readers that may have risen on the glittering steep, ("Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb?"*) has not been similarly attracted toward the roof, at the craggy foot of the ascent, under which golden dreams refreshed his straining sinews? Somewhat quickening his steps, now that a bourne was assigned to them, the man growing old in years, but, unhappily for himself, too tenacious of youth in its grand discontent, and keen susceptibilities to pain, strode noiselessly on, under the gaslights, under the stars; gaslights primly marshaled at equidistance; stars that seem, to the naked eye, dotted over space without symmetry or method — Man's order, near and finite, is so distinct; the Maker's order, remote, infinite, is so beyond Man's comprehension even of *what* is order!

Darrell paused, hesitating. He had now gained a spot in which improvement had altered the landmarks. The

* "Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar?"
BEATTIE.

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superb broad thoroughfare continued where once it had vanished abrupt in a labyrinth of courts and alleys. But the way was not hard to find. He turned a little toward the left, recognizing, with admiring interest, in the gay white would-be Grecian edifice, with its French *grille*, bronzed, gilded, the transformed Museum, in the still libraries of which he had sometimes snatched a brief and ghostly respite from books of law. Onward yet through lifeless Bloomsbury, not so far toward the last bounds of Atlas as the desolation of Poddon Place, but the solitude deepening as he passed. There it is, a quiet street indeed! not a soul on its gloomy pavements — not even a policeman's soul. Naught stirring save a stealthy, profligate, good-for-nothing cat, flitting fine through yon area bars. Down that street had he come, I trow, with a livelier, quicker step the day when, by the strange good luck which had uniformly attended his worldly career of honors, he had been suddenly called upon to supply the place of an absent senior, and, in almost his earliest brief, the Courts of Westminster had recognized a master; come, I trow, with a livelier step, knocked at that very door whereat he is halting now; entered the room where the young wife sat, and at sight of her querulous peevish face, and at sound of her unsympathizing languid voice, fled into his cupboard-like back-parlor — and muttered "courage" — courage to endure the home he had entered, longing for a voice which should invite and respond to a cry of joy.

How closed up, dumb, and blind, looked the small mean

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house, with its small mean door, its small mean rayless windows. Yet a FAME had been born there! Who are the residents now? Buried in slumber, have *they* any "golden dreams?" Works therein any struggling brain, to which the prosperous man might whisper "courage;" or beats, there, any troubled heart to which faithful woman should murmur "joy?" Who knows? London is a wondrous poem, but each page of it is written in a different language; no lexicon yet composed for any.

Back through the street, under the gaslights, under the stars went Guy Darrell, more slow and more thoughtful. Did the comparison between what he had been, what he was, the mean home just revisited, the stately home to which he would return, suggest thoughts of natural pride? it would not seem so; no pride in those close-shut lips, in that melancholy stoop.

He came into a quiet square — still Bloomsbury — and right before him was a large respectable mansion, almost as large as that one in courtlier quarters, to which he loiteringly delayed the lone return. There, too, had been, for a time, the dwelling which was called his *home*—there, when gold was rolling in like a tide, distinction won, position assured, there—not yet in Parliament, but foremost at the bar — already pressed by constituencies, already wooed by ministers — there, still young (oh, luckiest of lawyers!)—there had he moved his household gods. Fit residence for a Prince of the Gown. Is it when living there that you would envy the prosperous man? Yes, the moment his step *quits* that door; but envy him when

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he enters its threshold? — nay, envy rather that roofless Savoyard who has crept under yonder portico, asleep with his ragged arm round the cage of his stupid dormice! There, in that great barren drawing-room, sits a

"Pale and elegant Aspasia."

Well, but the wife's face is not querulous now. Look again—anxious, fearful, secret, sly. Oh, that fine lady, a Vipont Crooke, is not contented to be wife to the wealthy, great Mr. Darrell. What wants she? that *he* should be spouse to the fashionable fine Mrs. Darrell? Pride in him! not a jot of it; such pride were unchristian. Were he proud of her, as a Christian husband ought to be of so elegant a wife, would he still be in Bloomsbury? Envy *him!* the high gentleman, so true to his blood, all galled and blistered by the moral vulgarities of a tuft-hunting, toad-eating mimic of the Lady Selinas. Envy him! well, why not? All women have their foibles. Wise husbands must bear and forbear. Is that all? wherefore, then, is her aspect so furtive, wherefore on his a wild, vigilant sternness? Tut, what so brings into coveted fashion a fair lady exiled to Bloomsbury as the marked adoration of a lord, not her own, who gives law to St. James's! Untempted by passion, cold as ice to affection, if thawed to the gush of a sentiment, secretly preferring the husband she chose, wooed, and won, to idlers less gifted even in outward attractions; all this, yet seeking, coquetting for, the *éclat* of dishonor! To elope! Oh, no, too wary for that, but to be gazed at and talked of, as the fair Mrs. Darrell, to whom the Lovelace of London was so fondly

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devoted. Walk in, haughty son of the Dare-all. Darest thou ask who has just left thy house? Darest thou ask what and whence is the note that sly hand has secreted? Darest thou?—perhaps yes: what then? canst thou lock up thy wife? canst thou poniard the Lovelace? Lock up the air; poniard all whose light word in St. James's can bring into fashion the matron of Bloomsbury! Go, lawyer, go, study briefs, and be parchment.

Agonies—agonies—shot again through Guy Darrell's breast, as he looked on that large, most respectable house, and remembered his hourly campaign against disgrace! He has triumphed. Death fights for him: on the very brink of the last scandal, a cold, caught at some Vipont's ball, became fever; and so from that door the Black Horses bore away the Bloomsbury Dame, ere she was yet —the fashion! Happy in grief the widower who may, with confiding hand, ransack the lost wife's harmless desk, sure that no thought concealed from him in life will rise accusing from the treasured papers! But that pale, proud mourner, hurrying the eye over sweet-scented *billets*, compelled, in very justice to the dead, to convince himself that the mother of his children was corrupt only at heart —that the Black Horses had come to the door in time— and, wretchedly consoled by that niggardly conviction, flinging into the flames the last flimsy tatters on which his honor (rock-like in his own keeping) had been fluttering to and fro in the charge of a vain, treacherous fool! Envy you *that* mourner? No! not even in his release. Memory is not nailed down in the velvet coffin; and to

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great loyal natures, less bitter is the memory of the lost when hallowed by tender sadness, than when coupled with scorn and shame.

The wife is dead. Dead, too, long years ago, the Lothario! The world has forgotten them; they fade out of this very record when ye turn the page; no influence, no bearing have they on such future events as may mark what yet rests of life to Guy Darrell. But as he there stands and gazes into space, the two forms are before his eye as distinct as if living still. Slowly, slowly he gazes them down; the false smiles flicker away from their feeble lineaments; woe and terror on their aspects — they sink, they shrivel, they dissolve!

CHAPTER VI.

The wreck cast back from Charybdis.

Souviens-toi de ta Gabrielle.

Guy Darrell turned hurriedly from the large house in the great square, and, more and more absorbed in reverie, he wandered out of his direct way homeward, clear and broad though it was, and did not rouse himself till he felt, as it were, that the air had grown darker; and looking vaguely round, he saw that he had strayed into a dim maze of lanes and passages. He paused under one of the rare lamp-posts, gathering up his recollections of the London he had so long quitted, and doubtful for a

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moment or two which turn to take. Just then, up from an alley fronting him at right angles, came sullenly, warily, a tall, sinewy, ill-boding tatterdemalion figure, and seeing Darrell's face under the lamp, halted abrupt at the mouth of the narrow passage from which it had emerged — a dark form filling up the dark aperture. Does that ragged wayfarer recognize a foe by the imperfect ray of the lamp-light? or is he a mere vulgar footpad, who is doubting whether he should spring upon a prey? Hostile his look — his gesture — the sudden cowering down of the strong frame, as if for a bound; but still he is irresolute. What awes him? What awes the tiger, who would obey his blood-instinct without fear, in his rush on the Negro — the Hindoo—but who halts and hesitates at sight of the white man—the lordly son of Europe? Darrell's eye was turned toward the dark passage—toward the dark figure —carelessly, neither recognizing, nor fearing, nor defying —carelessly, as at any harmless object in crowded streets, and at broad day. But while that eye was on him, the tatterdemalion halted, and, indeed, whatever his hostility, or whatever his daring, the sight of Darrell took him by so sudden a surprise, that he could not at once re-collect his thoughts, and determine how to approach the quiet, unconscious man who, in reach of his spring, fronted his overwhelming physical strength with the habitual air of dignified command. His first impulse was that of violence; his second impulse curbed the first. But Darrell now turns quickly, and walks straight on; the figure quits the mouth of the passage, and follows with a long and

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noiseless stride. It has nearly gained Darrell. With what intent? A fierce one, perhaps — for the man's face is sinister, and his state evidently desperate — when there emerges unexpectedly from an ugly-looking court or *cul de sac*, just between Darrell and his pursuer, a slim, long-backed, buttoned up, weasel-faced policeman. The policeman eyes the tatterdemalion instinctively, then turns his glance toward the solitary, defenceless gentleman in advance, and walks on, keeping himself between the two. The tatterdemalion stifles an impatient curse. Be his purpose force, be it only supplication, be it colloquy of any kind, impossible to fulfill it while that policeman is there. True, that in his powerful hands he could have clutched that slim, long-backed officer, and broken him in two as a willow wand. But that officer is the Personation of Law, and can stalk through a legion of tatterdemalions as a ferret may glide through a barn full of rats. The prowler feels he is suspected. Unknown as yet to the London police, he has no desire to invite their scrutiny. He crosses the way; he falls back; he follows from afar. The policeman may yet turn away before the safer streets of the metropolis be gained. No; the cursed Incarnation of Law, with eyes in its slim back, continues its slow stride at the heels of the unsuspicious Darrell. The more solitary defiles are already passed — now that dim lane, with its dead wall on one side. By the dead wall skulks the prowler; on the other side still walks The Law. Now — alas for the prowler! — shine out the thoroughfares, no longer dim nor deserted—Leicester Square, the Haymar-

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ket, Pall Mall, Carlton Gardens; Darrell is at his door. The policeman turns sharply round. There, at the corner near the learned Club-house, halts the tatterdemalion. Toward the tatterdemalion the policeman now advances quickly. The tatterdemalion is quicker still — fled like a guilty thought.

Back — back — back into that maze of passages and courts — back to the mouth of that black alley. There he halts again. Look at him. He has arrived in London but that very night, after an absence of more than four years. He has arrived from the sea-side on foot; see, his shoes are worn into holes. He has not yet found a shelter for the night. He has been directed toward that quarter, thronged with adventurers, native and foreign, for a shelter, safe, if squalid. It is somewhere near that court, at the mouth of which he stands. He looks round, the policeman is baffled, the coast clear. He steals forth, and pauses under the same gaslight as that under which Guy Darrell had paused before — under the same gaslight, under the same stars. From some recess in his rags he draws forth a large, distained, distended pocket-book — last relic of sprucer days — leather of dainty morocco, once elaborately tooled, patent springs, fairy lock, fit receptacle for bank-notes, *billets-daux*, memoranda of debts of honor, or pleasurable engagements. Now how worn, tarnished, greasy, rapscallion-like, the costly bauble! Filled with what motley, unlovable contents — stale pawn-tickets of foreign *monts de pieté*, pledges never henceforth to be redeemed; scrawls by

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villainous hands in thievish hieroglyphics; ugly implements replacing the malachite penknife, the golden toothpick, the jeweled pencil-case, once so neatly set within their satin lappets. Ugly implements, indeed — a file, a gimlet, loaded dice. Pell-mell, with such more hideous and recent contents, dishonored evidences of gaudier summer life — locks of ladies' hair, love-notes treasured mechanically, not from amorous sentiment, but perhaps from some vague idea that they might be of use if those who gave the locks or wrote the notes should be raised in fortune, and could buy back the memorials of shame. Diving amidst these miscellaneous documents and treasures, the prowler's hand rested on some old letters in clerk-like fair caligraphy, tied round with a dirty string, and on them, in another and fresher writing, a scrap that contained an address — "Samuel Adolphus Poole, Esq., Alhambra Villa, Regent's Park." "To-morrow, Nix my Dolly; to-morrow," muttered the tatterdemalion; "but to-night — plague on it, where is the other blackguard's direction? Ah, here —" And he extracted from the thievish scrawls a *peculiarly* thievish-looking hieroglyph. Now, as he lifts it up to read by the gaslight, survey him well. Do you not know him? Is it possible? What! the brilliant sharper! The ruffian exquisite! Jasper Losely! Can it be? Once before, in the fields of Fawley, we beheld him out of elbows, seedy, shabby, ragged. But then it was the decay of a foppish spendthrift — clothes distained, ill-assorted, yet still of fine cloth; shoes in holes, yet still pearl-colored

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brodequins. But now it is the decay of no foppish spendthrift; the rags are not of fine cloth; the tattered shoes are not brodequins. The man has fallen far below the politer grades of knavery, in which the sharper affects the beau. And the countenance, as we last saw it, if it had lost much of its earlier beauty, was still incontestably handsome. What with vigor, and health, and animal spirits, *then* on the aspect still lingered light; *now* from corruption, the light itself was gone. In that Herculean constitution excess of all kinds had at length forced its ravage, and the ravage was visible in the ruined face. The once sparkling eye was dull and bloodshot. The colors of the cheek, once clear and vivid, to which fiery drink had only sent the blood in a warmer glow, were now of a leaden dullness, relieved but by broken streaks of angry red — like gleams of flame struggling through gathered smoke. The profile, once sharp and delicate like Apollo's was now confused in its swollen outline; a few years more, and it would be gross as that of Silenus — the nostrils, distended with incipient carbuncles, which betray the knawing fang that alcohol fastens into the liver. Evil passions had destroyed the outline of the once beautiful lips, arched as a Cupid's bow. The sideling, lowering, villainous expression which had formerly been but occasional, was now habitual and heightened. It was the look of the bison before it gores. It is true, however, that even yet on the countenance there lingered the trace of that lavish favor bestowed on it by nature. An artist would still have said, "How handsome that

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ruggamuffin must have been!" And true is it, also, that there was yet that about the bearing of the man which contrasted his squalor, and seemed to say that he had not been born to wear rags, and loiter at midnight among the haunts of thieves. Nay, I am not sure that you would have been as incredulous now, if told that the wild outlaw before you had some claim by birth or by nurture to the rank of gentleman, as you would had you seen the gay spendthrift in his gaudy day, For then he seemed below, and now he seemed above, the grade in which he took place. And all this made his aspect yet more sinister, and the impression that he was dangerous yet more profound. Muscular strength often remains to a powerful frame long after the constitution is undermined, and Jasper Losely's frame was still that of a formidable athlete; nay, its strength was yet more apparent now that the shoulders and limbs had increased in bulk, than when it was half-disguised in the lissom symmetry of exquisite proportion — less active, less supple, less capable of endurance, but with more crushing weight in its rush or its blow. It was the figure in which brute force seems so to predominate that in a savage state it would have worn a crown — the figure which secures command and authority in all societies where force alone gives the law. Thus, under the gaslight and under the stars, stood the terrible animal — a strong man imbruted — "SOUVIENS-TOI DE TA GABRIELLE." There, still uneffaced, though the gold-threads are all tarnished and ragged, are the ominous words on the silk of the she-devil's love-token! But

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Jasper has now inspected the direction on the paper he held to the lamp-light, and, satisfying himself that he was in the right quarter, restored the paper to the bulky, distended pocket-book, and walked sullenly on toward the court from which had emerged the policeman who had crossed his prowling chase.

"It is the most infernal shame," said Losely, between his grinded teeth, "that I should be driven to these wretched dens for a lodging, while that man who ought to feel bound to maintain me should be rolling in wealth, and cottoned up in a palace. But he shall fork out. Sophy must be hunted up. I will clothe her in rags like these. She shall sit at his street-door. I will shame the miserly hunks. But how track the girl? Have I no other hold over him? Can I send Dolly Poole to him? How addled my brains are! — want of food — want of sleep. Is this the place? Peuh!"

Thus murmuring he now reached the arch of the court, and was swallowed up in its gloom. A few strides, and he came into a square open space, only lighted by the skies A house, larger than the rest, which were of the meanest order, stood somewhat back, occupying nearly one side of the quadrangle — old, dingy, dilapidated. At the door of this house stood another man, applying his latch-key to the lock. As Losely approached, the man turned quickly, half in fear, half in menace—a small, very thin, impish-looking man, with peculiarly restless features that seemed trying to run away from his face. Thin as he was, he looked all skin and no bones — a goblin of a

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man whom it would not astonish you to hear could creep through a keyhole. Seeming still more shadowy and impalpable by his slight, thin, sable dress, not of cloth, but a sort of stuff like alpaca. Nor was that dress ragged, nor, as seen but in starlight, did it look worn or shabby; still you had but to glance at the creature to feel that it was a child in the same Family of Night as the ragged felon that towered by its side. The two outlaws stared at each other. "Cutts!" said Losely, in the old rollicking voice, but in a hoarser, rougher key — "Cutts, my boy, here I am, welcome me!"

"What! General Jas.!" returned Cutts, in a tone which was not without a certain respectful awe, and then proceeded to pour out a series of questions in a mysterious language, which may be thus translated and abridged: "How long have you been in England? how has it fared with you? you seem very badly off? coming here to hide? nothing very bad, I hope? what is it?"

Jasper answered in the same language, though with less practiced mastery of it — and with that constitutional levity which, whatever the time or circumstance, occasionally gave a strange sort of wit, or queer, uncanny, devil-me-care vein of drollery, to his modes of expression

"Three months of the worst luck man ever had—a row with the *gens-d'armes* — long story — three of our pals seized—affair of the galleys for them, I suspect—French frogs can't seize me — fricasseed one or two of them — broke away — crossed the country — reached the coast — found an honest smuggler — landed off Sussex with a few

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other kegs of brandy — remembered you — preserved the address you gave me — and condescend to this rat-hole for a night or so. Let me in — knock up somebody — break open the larder — I want to eat — I am famished — I should have eaten you by this time, only there's nothing on your bones."

The little man opened the door — a passage black as Erebus. "Give me your hand, General." Jasper was led through the pitchy gloom for a few yards; then the guide found a gas-cock, and the place broke suddenly into light. A dirty narrow stair-case on one side; facing it, a sort of lobby, in which an open door showed a long, sanded parlor, like that in public-houses — several tables, benches, the walls whitewashed, but adorned with sundry ingenious designs made by charcoal or the smoked ends of clay-pipes. A strong smell of stale tobacco and of gin and rum. Another gaslight, swinging from the center of the ceiling, sprang into light as Cutts touched the tap-cock.

"Wait here," said the guide. "I will go and get you some supper."

"And some brandy," said Jasper.

"Of course."

The bravo threw himself at length on one of the tables, and, closing his eyes, moaned. His vast strength had become acquainted with physical pain. In its stout knots and fibers, aches and sharp twinges, the dragon-teeth of which had been sown years ago in revels or brawls, which then seemed to bring but innocuous joy and easy triumph,

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now began to gnaw and grind. But when Cutts reappeared with coarse viands and the brandy-bottle, Jasper shook off the sense of pain, as does a wounded wild beast that can still devour; and after regaling fast and ravenously, he emptied half the bottle at a draught, and felt himself restored and fresh.

"Shall you fling yourself among the swell fellows who hold their club here, General?" asked Cutts; "'tis a bad trade, every year it gets worse. Or have you not some higher game in your eye?"

"I have higher game in my eye. One bird I marked down this very night. But that may be slow work, and uncertain. I have in this pocketbook a bank to draw upon meanwhile."

"How?—forged French *billets de banque*—dangerous."

"Pooh! better than that; letters which prove theft against a respectable rich man."

"Ah, you expect hush-money?"

"Exactly so. I have good friends in London."

"Among them, I suppose, that affectionate 'adopted mother' who would have kept you in such order."

"Thousand thunders! I hope not. I am not a superstitious man, but I fear that woman as if she were a witch, and I believe she is one. You remember black Jean, whom we called *Sans culotte*. He would have filled a church-yard with his own brats for a five-franc piece; but he would not have crossed a church-yard alone at night for a thousand Naps. Well, that woman to me

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is what a church-yard was to black Jean. No; if she is in London, I have but to go to her house and say, 'Food, shelter, money;' and I would rather ask Jack Ketch for a rope."

"How do you account for it, General? She does not beat you — she is not your wife. I have seen many a stout fellow, who would stand fire without blinking, show the white feather at a scold's tongue. But then he must be spliced to her —"

"Cutts, that griffin does not scold — she preaches. She wants to make me spooney, Cutts — she talks of my young days, Cutts—she wants to blight me into what she calls an honest man, Cutts; — the virtuous dodge! She snubs and cows me, and frightens me out of my wits, Cutts. For I do believe that the witch is determined to have me, body and soul, and to marry me some day in spite of myself, Cutts. And if ever you see me about to be clutched in those horrible paws, poison me with rats-bane, or knock me on the head, Cutts."

The little man laughed a little laugh, sharp and eldritch, at the strange cowardice of the stalwart dare-devil. But Jasper did not echo the laugh.

"Hush!" he said, timidly, "and let me have a bed, if you can; I have not slept in one for a week, and my nerves are shaky."

The imp lighted a candle-end at the gas-lamp, and conducted Losely up the stairs to his own sleeping-room, which was less comfortless than might be supposed. He resigned his bed to the wanderer, who flung himself on

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it, rags and all. But sleep was no more at his command than it is at a king's.

"Why the —— did you talk of that witch?" he cried, peevishly, to Cutts, who was composing himself to rest on the floor. "I swear I fancy I feel her sitting on my chest like a nightmare."

He turned with a vehemence which shook the walls, and wrapped the coverlid round him, plunging his head into its folds. Strange though it seem to the novice in human nature—to Jasper Losely the woman who had so long lived but for one object—viz., to save him from the gibbet, was as his evil genius, his haunting fiend. He had conceived a profound terror of her, from the moment he perceived that she was resolutely bent upon making him honest. He had broken from her years ago—fled—resumed his evil courses—hid himself from her—in vain. Wherever he went, there went she. He might baffle the police, not her. Hunger had often forced him to accept her aid. As soon as he received it, he hid from her again, burying himself deeper and deeper in the mud, like a persecuted tench. He associated her idea with all the ill-luck that had befallen him. Several times some villainous scheme on which he had counted to make his fortune had been baffled in the most mysterious way; and just when baffled—and there seemed no choice but to cut his own throat or some one else's—up turned grim Arabella Crane, in the iron-gray gown, and with the iron-gray ringlets—hatefully, awfully beneficent—offering food, shelter, gold — and some demoniacal, honorable work.

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Often had he been in imminent peril from watchful law or treacherous accomplice. She had warned and saved him as she had saved him from the fell Gabrielle Desmarets, who, unable to bear the sentence of penal servitude, after a long process defended with astonishing skill, and enlisting the romantic sympathies of young France, had contrived to escape into another world by means of a subtle poison concealed about her *distinguée* person, and which she had prepared years ago with her own bloodless hands, and no doubt scientifically tested its effect on others. The cobra capella is gone at last! "*Souviens-toi de ta Gabrielle*," O Jasper Losely! But why Arabella Crane should thus continue to watch over him whom she no longer professed to love — how she should thus have acquired the gift of ubiquity and the power to save him—Jasper Losely could not conjecture. The whole thing seemed to him weird and supernatural. Most truly did he say that she had *cowed him.* He had often longed to strangle her; when absent from her, had often resolved upon that act of gratitude. The moment he came in sight of her stern, haggard face—her piercing lurid eyes — the moment he heard her slow, dry voice in some such sentences as these: "Again you come to me in your trouble, and ever shall. Am I not still as your mother, but with a wife's fidelity, till death us do part. There is the portrait of what you were — look at it, Jasper. Now turn to the glass — see what you are. Think of the fate of Gabrielle Desmarets! But for me what, long since, had been your own? But I will save

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you—I have sworn it. You shall be wax in these hands at last;" the moment that voice thus claimed and insisted on redeeming him, the ruffian felt a cold shudder—his courage oozed—he could no more have nerved his arm against her than a Thug would have lifted his against the dire goddess of his murderous superstition. Jasper could not resist a belief that the life of this dreadful protectress was, somehow or other, made essential to his—that, were she to die, he should perish in some ghastly and preternatural expiation. But for the last few months he had, at length, escaped from her—diving so low, so deep into the mud, that even her net could not mesh him. Hence, perhaps, the imminence of the perils from which he had so narrowly escaped—hence the utterness of his present destitution. But man, however vile, whatever his peril, whatever his destitution, was born free, and loves liberty. Liberty to go to Satan in his own way was to Jasper Losely a supreme blessing compared to that benignant compassionate *espionage*, with its relentless eye and restraining hand. Alas and alas! deem not this perversity unnatural in that headstrong self-destroyer! How many are there whom not a grim hard-featured Arabella Crane, but the long-suffering, divine, omniscient, gentle Providence itself, seeks to warn, to aid, to save—and is shunned, and loathed, and fled from, as if it were an evil genius! How many are there who fear nothing so much as the being made good in spite of themselves?—how many?—who can count them?

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CHAPTER VII.

The public man needs but one patron — viz., THE LUCKY MOMENT.

"At his house in Carlton Gardens, Guy Darrell, Esq., for the season."

Simple insertion in the pompous list of Fashionable Arrivals! — the name of a plain commoner imbedded in the amber which glitters with so many coronets and stars! Yet such is England, with all its veneration for titles, that the eyes of the public passed indifferently over the rest of that chronicle of illustrious "whereabouts," to rest with interest, curiosity, speculation, on the unemblazoned name which but a day before had seemed slipped out of date— obsolete as that of an actor who figures no more in play-bills. Unquestionably the sensation excited was due, in much, to the "ambiguous voices" which Colonel Morley had disseminated throughout the genial atmosphere of Club-rooms. "Arrived in London for the season!" he, the orator, once so famous, long so forgotten, who had been out of the London world for the space of more than half a generation. "Why now? why for the season?" quoth the Colonel. "He is still in the prime of life as a public man, and — a CRISIS is at hand!"

But that which gave weight and significance to Alban Morley's hints, was the report in the newspapers of Guy

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Darrell's visit to his old constituents, and of the short speech he had addressed to them, to which he had so slightly referred in his conversation with Alban. True, the speech *was* short: true, it touched but little on passing topics of political interest — rather alluding, with modesty and terseness, to the contests and victories of a former day. But still, in the few words there was the swell of the old clarion — the wind of the Paladin's horn which woke Fontarabian echoes.

It is astonishing how capricious, how sudden are the changes in value of a public man. All depends upon whether the public want, or believe they want, the man; and that is a question upon which the public do not know their own minds a week before; nor do they always keep in the same mind, when made up, for a week together. If they do not want a man — if he do not hit the taste, nor respond to the exigency of the time — whatever his eloquence, his abilities, his virtues, they push him aside, or cry him down. Is he wanted? — does the mirror of the moment reflect his image? — that mirror is an intense magnifier; his proportions swell — they become gigantic. At that moment the public wanted some man; and the instant the hint was given, "Why not Guy Darrell?" Guy Darrell was seized upon as *the* man wanted. It was one of these times in our Parliamentary history when the public are out of temper with all parties — when recognized leaders have contrived to damage themselves — when a Cabinet is shaking, and the public neither care to destroy nor to keep it; a time, too, when the country

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seemed in some danger, and when, mere men of business held unequal to the emergency, whatever name suggested associations of vigor, eloquence, genius, rose to a premium above its market-price in times of tranquility and tape. Without effort of his own—by the mere force of the under-current — Guy Darrell was thrown up from oblivion into note. He could not form a cabinet — certainly not; but he might help to bring a cabinet together, reconcile jarring elements, adjust disputed questions, take in such government some high place, influence its councils, and delight a public weary of the oratory of the day with the eloquence of a former race. For the public is ever a *laudator temporis acti*, and whatever the authors or the orators immediately before it, were those authors and orators Homers and Ciceros, would still shake a disparaging head, and talk of these degenerate days, as Homer himself talked ages before Leonidas stood in the Pass of Thermopylæ, or Miltiades routed Asian armaments at Marathon. Guy Darrell belonged to a former race. The fathers of those young Members rising now into fame, had quoted to their sons his pithy sentences, his vivid images; and added, as Fox added when quoting Burke, "but you should have heard and seen the man!"

Heard and seen the man! But there he was again!—come up as from a grave — come up to the public just when such a man was wanted. Wanted how? wanted where? Oh, somehow and somewhere! There he is! make the most of him.

The house in Carlton Gardens is prepared, the estab-

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lishment mounted. Thither flock all the Viponts — nor they alone; all the chiefs of all parties — nor they alone; all the notabilities of our grand metropolis. Guy Darrell might be startled at his own position; but he comprehended its nature, and it did not discompose his nerves. He knew public life well enough to be aware how much the popular favor is the creature of an accident. By chance he had nicked the time; had he thus come to town the season before, he might have continued obscure; a man like Guy Darrell not being wanted then. Whether with or without design, his bearing confirmed and extended the effect produced by his reappearance. Gracious, but modestly reserved — he spoke little, listened beautifully. Many of the questions which agitated all around him had grown up into importance since his day of action; nor in his retirement had he traced their progressive developement, with their changeful effects upon men and parties. But a man who has once gone deeply into practical politics might sleep in the cave of Trophonius for twenty years, and find, on waking, very little to learn. Darrell regained the level of the day, and seized upon all the strong points on which men were divided, with the rapidity of a prompt and comprehensive intellect — his judgment perhaps the clearer from the freshness of long repose, and the composure of dispassionate survey. When partisans wrangled as to what should have been done, Darrell was silent; when they asked what should *be* done, out came one of his terse sentences, and a knot was cut. Meanwhile it is true this man, round whom expectations

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grouped and rumor buzzed, was in neither House of Parliament; but that was rather a delay to his energies than a detriment to his consequence. Important constituencies, anticipating a vacancy, were already on the look-out for him; a smaller constituency, in the interim, Carr Vipont undertook to procure him any day. There was always a Vipont ready to accept something — even the Chiltern hundreds. But Darrell, not without reason, demurred at re-entering the House of Commons after an absence of seventeen years. He had left it with one of those rare reputations which no wise man likes rashly to imperil. The Viponts sighed. He would certainly be more useful in the Commons than the Lords, but still in the Lords he would be of great use. They would want a debating lord, perhaps a lord acquainted with law in the coming CRISIS; — if he preferred the peerage? Darrell demurred still. The man's modesty was insufferable — his style of speaking might not suit that august assembly; and as to law — he could never now be a law lord — he should be but a ci-devant advocate, affecting the part of a judicial amateur.

In short, without declining to re-enter public life, seeming, on the contrary, to resume all his interest in it, Darrell contrived with admirable dexterity to elude for the present all overtures pressed upon him, and even to convince his admirers, not only of his wisdom but of his patriotism in that reticence. For certainly he thus managed to exercise a very considerable influence — his advice was more sought, his suggestions more heeded, and his power

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in reconciling certain rival jealousies was perhaps greater than would have been the case if he had actually entered either House of Parliament, and thrown himself exclusively into the ranks, not only of one party, but of one section of a party. Nevertheless, such suspense could not last very long; he must decide at all events before the next session. Once he was seen in the arena of his old triumphs, on the benches devoted to strangers distinguished by the Speaker's order. There, recognized by the older members, eagerly gazed at by the younger, Guy Darrell listened calmly, throughout a long field night, to voices that must have roused from forgotten graves, kindling and glorious memories; voices of those — veterans now—by whose side he had once struggled for some cause which he had then, in the necessary exaggeration of all honest enthusiasm, identified with a nation's life-blood. Voices too of the old antagonists, over whose routed arguments he had marched triumphant amidst applauses that the next day rang again through England from side to side. Hark, the very man with whom, in the old battle-days, he had been the most habitually pitted, is speaking now. His tones are embarrassed—his argument confused. Does he know who listens yonder? Old members think so — smile, whisper each other, and glance significantly where Darrell sits.

Sits, as became him, tranquil, respectful, intent, seemingly, perhaps really, unconscious of the sensation he excites. What an eye for an orator! how like the eye in a portrait! it seems to fix on each other eye that seeks it —

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steady, fascinating. Yon distant members behind the Speaker's chair, at the far distance, feel the light of that eye travel toward them. How lofty and massive among all those rows of human heads seems that forehead, bending slightly down, with the dark, strong line of the weighty eyebrow! But what is passing within that secret mind? Is there mournfulness in the retrospect? Is there eagerness to renew the strife? Is that interest in the Hour's debate feigned or real? Impossible for him who gazed upon that face to say. And that eye would have seemed to the gazer to read himself through and through to the heart's core, long ere the gazer could hazard a single guess as to the thoughts beneath that marble forehead, as to the emotions within the heart over which, in old senatorial fashion, the arms were folded with so conventional an ease.

CHAPTER VIII.

Darrell and Lionel.

Darrell had received Lionel with some evident embarrassment, which soon yielded to affectionate warmth. He took to the young man whose fortunes he had so improved; he felt that with the improved fortunes the young man's whole being was improved; — assured position, early commune with the best social circles, in which the equality of fashion smooths away all disparities in rank, had softened in Lionel much of the wayward and morbid

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irritability of his boyish pride; but the high spirit, the generous love of independence, the scorn of mercenary calculation, were strong as ever; these were in the grain of his nature. In common with all who in youth aspire to be one day noted from "the undistinguishable many," Lionel had formed to himself a certain ideal standard, above the ordinary level of what the world is contented to call honest, or esteem clever. He admitted into his estimate of life the heroic element, not undesirable even in the most practical point of view, for the world is so in the habit of decrying — of disbelieving in high motives and pure emotions — of daguerreotyping itself with all its ugliest wrinkles, stripped of the true bloom that brightens, of the true expression that redeems, those defects which it invites the sun to limn, that we shall never judge human nature aright, if we do not set out in life with our gaze on its fairest beauties, and our belief in its latent good. In a word, we should begin with the Heroic, if we would learn the Human. But though to himself Lionel thus secretly prescribed a certain superiority of type, to be sedulously aimed at, even if never actually attained, he was wholly without pedantry and arrogance toward his own contemporaries. From this he was saved not only by good-nature, animal spirits, frank hardihood, but by the very affluence of ideas which animated his tongue, colored his language, and whether to young or old, wise or dull, made his conversation racy and original. He was a delightful companion; and if he had taken much instruction from those older and wiser than himself, he so bathed

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that instruction in the fresh fountain of his own lively intelligence, so warmed it at his own beating impulsive heart, that he could make an old man's gleanings from experience seem a young man's guesses into truth. Faults he had, of course — chiefly the faults common at his age; among them, perhaps, the most dangerous were — Firstly, carelessness in money matters; secondly, a distaste for advice in which prudence was visibly predominant. His tastes were not in reality extravagant; but money slipped through his hands, leaving little to show for it; and when his quarterly allowance became due, ample though it was — too ample, perhaps — debts wholly forgotten started up to seize hold of it. And debts, as yet being manageable, were not regarded with sufficient horror. Paid or put aside, as the case might be, they were merely looked upon as bores. Youth is in danger till it learn to look upon them as furies. For advice, he took it with pleasure, when clothed with elegance and art — when it addressed ambition — when it exalted the loftier virtues. But advice, practical and prosy, went in at one ear and out at the other. In fact, with many talents, he had yet no adequate ballast of common sense; and if ever he get enough to steady his bark through life's trying voyage, the necessity of so much dull weight must be forcibly striken home less to his reason than his imagination or his heart. But if, somehow or other, he get it not, I will not insure his vessel.

I know not if Lionel Haughton had genius; he never assumed that he had; but he had something more like genius than that prototype — RESOLVE — of which he

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boasted to the artist. He had youth — real youth — youth of mind, youth of heart, youth of soul. Lithe and supple as he moved before you, with the eye to which light or dew sprung at once from a nature vibrating to every lofty, every tender thought, he seemed more than young — the incarnation of youth.

Darrell took to him at once. Amidst all the engagements crowded on the important man, he contrived to see Lionel daily. And what may seem strange, Guy Darrell felt more at home with Lionel Haughton than with any of his own contemporaries—than even with Alban Morley. To the last, indeed, he opened speech with less reserve of certain portions of the past, or of certain projects in the future. But still, even there, he adopted a tone of half-playful, half-mournful satire, which might be in itself disguise. Alban Morley, with all his good qualities, was a man of the world; as a man of the world, Guy Darrell talked to him. But it was only a very small part of Guy Darrell the man of which the world could say "mine."

To Lionel he let out, as if involuntarily, the more amiable, tender, poetic attributes of his varying, complex, uncomprehended character; not professedly confiding, but not taking pains to conceal. Hearing what worldlings would call "Sentiment" in Lionel, he seemed to glide softly down to Lionel's own years, and talk "sentiment" in return. After all, this skilled lawyer, this noted politician, had a great dash of the boy still in him. Reader, did you ever meet a really clever man who had not?

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CHAPTER IX.

Saith a very homely proverb (pardon its vulgarity), "You can not make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." But a sow's ear is a much finer work of art than a silk purse. And grand, indeed, the mechanician who could make a sow's ear out of a silk purse, or conjure into creatures of flesh and blood the sarcenet and *tulle* of a London drawing-room.

"MAMMA," asked Honoria Carr Vipont, "what sort of a person was Mrs. Darrell?"

"She was not in our set, my dear," answered Lady Selina. "The Vipont Crookes are just one of those connections in which, though, of course, one is civil to all connections, one is more or less intimate, according as they take after the Viponts or after the Crookes. Poor woman! she died just before Mr. Darrell entered Parliament, and appeared in society. But I should say she was not an agreeable person. Not nice," added Lady Selina, after a pause, and conveying a world of meaning in that conventional monosyllable.

"I suppose she was very accomplished—very clever?"

"Quite the reverse, my dear. Mr. Darrell was exceedingly young when he married—scarcely of age. She was not the sort of woman to suit him."

"But at least she must have been very much attached to him—very proud of him?"

Lady Selina glanced aside from her work, and observed

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her daughter's face, which evinced an animation not usual to a young lady of a breeding so lofty, and a mind so well disciplined.

"I don't think," said Lady Selina, "that she was proud of him. She would have been proud of his station, or rather of that to which his fame and fortune would have raised her, had she lived to enjoy it. But for a few years after her marriage they were very poor; and though his rise at the bar was sudden and brilliant, he was long wholly absorbed in his profession, and lived in Bloomsbury. Mrs. Darrell was not proud of *that*. The Crookes are generally fine — give themselves airs — marry into great houses if they can — but we can't naturalize them — they always remain Crookes — useful connections, very! Carr says we have not a more useful—but third-rate, my dear. All the Crookes are bad wives, because they are never satisfied with their own homes, but are always trying to get into great people's homes. Not very long before she died, Mrs. Darrell took her friend and relation, Mrs. Lyndsay, to live with her. I suspect it was not from affection, or any great consideration for Mrs. Lyndsay's circumstances (which were indeed those of actual destitution, till — thanks to Mr. Darrell — she won her lawsuit), but simply because she looked to Mrs. Lyndsay to get her into our set. Mrs. Lyndsay was a great favorite with all of us — charming manners—perfectly correct, too—thorough Vipont — thorough gentlewoman — but artful! Oh, *so* artful! She humored poor Mrs. Darrell's absurd vanity; but she took care not to injure herself. Of course, Dar-

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rell's wife, and a Vipont — though only a Vipont Crooke — had free passport into the outskirts of good society, the great parties, and so forth. But there it stopped; even I should have been compromised if I had admitted into our set a woman who was bent on compromising herself. Handsome — in a bad style — not the Vipont *tournure;* and not only silly and flirting, but—(we are alone, keep the secret) — decidedly vulgar, my dear."

"You amaze me! How such a man —" Honoria stopped, coloring up to the temples.

"Clever men," said Lady Selina, "as a general rule, do choose the oddest wives! The cleverer a man is, the more easily, I do believe, a woman can take him in. However, to do Mr. Darrell justice, he has been taken in only once. After Mrs. Darrell's death, Mrs. Lyndsay, I suspect, tried her chance, but failed. Of course, she could not actually stay in the same house with a widower who was then young, and who had only to get rid of a wife to whom one was forced to be shy, in order to be received into our set with open arms; and, in short, to be of the very best *monde.* Mr. Darrell came into Parliament immensely rich (a legacy from an old East Indian, besides his own professional savings) — took the house he has now, close by us. Mrs. Lyndsay was obliged to retire to a cottage at Fulham. But as she professed to be a second mother to poor Matilda Darrell, she contrived to be very much at Carlton Gardens; her daughter Caroline was nearly always there, profiting by Matilda's masters; and I did think that Mrs. Lyndsay would have caught

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Darrell — but your papa said 'No,' and he was right, as he always is. Nevertheless, Mrs. Lyndsay would have been an excellent wife to a public man — so popular — knew the world so well — never made enemies till she made an enemy of poor dear Montfort; but that was natural. Sweet creature! but how absurd, shutting herself up as if she were fretting for Montfort! That's so like her mother — heartless — but full of propriety."

Here Carr Vipont and Colonel Morley entered the room. "We have just left Darrell," said Carr; "he will dine here to-day, to meet our cousin Alban. I have asked *his* cousin, young Haughton, and * * * *, and * * * *, *your* cousins, Selina — (a small party of cousins) — so lucky to find Darrell disengaged."

"I ventured to promise," said the Colonel, addressing Honoria in an under voice, "that Darrell should hear you play Beethoven."

HONORIA. "Is Mr. Darrell so fond of music, then?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "One would not have thought it. He keeps a secretary at Fawley who plays the flute. There's something very interesting about Darrell. I wish you could hear his ideas on marriage and domestic life — more freshness of heart than in the young men one meets nowadays. It may be prejudice; but it seems to me that the young fellows of the present race, if more sober and staid then we were, are sadly wanting in character and spirit — no warm blood in their veins. But I should not talk thus to a demoiselle who has all those young fellows at her feet."

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"Oh," said Lady Selina, overhearing, and with a half-laugh, "Honoria thinks much as you do; she finds the young men so insipid — all like one another — the same set phrases."

"The same stereotyped ideas," added Honoria, moving away with a gesture of calm disdain.

"A very superior mind hers," whispered the Colonel to Carr Vipont. "*She'll* never marry a fool."

Guy Darrell was very pleasant at "the small family dinner-party." Carr was always popular in his manners — the true old House of Commons manner, which was very like that of a gentlemanlike public school. Lady Selina, as had been said before, in her own family circle was natural and genial. Young Carr, there, without his wife, more pretentious than his father — being a Lord of the Admiralty — felt a certain awe of Darrell, and spoke little, which was much to his own credit, and to the general conviviality. The other members of the symposium, besides Lady Selina, Honoria, and a younger sister, were but Darrell, Lionel, and Lady Selina's two cousins; elderly peers — one with the garter, the other in the cabinet — jovial men, who had been wild fellows once in the same mess-room, and still joked at each other whenever they met as they met now. Lionel, who remembered Vance's description of Lady Selina, and who had since heard her spoken of in society as a female despot who carried to perfection the arts by which despots flourish, with majesty to impose, and caresses to deceive — an Aurungzebe in petticoats — was sadly at a loss to re-

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concile such portraiture with the good-humored, motherly woman who talked to him of her home, her husband, her children, with open fondness and becoming pride, and who, far from being so formidably clever as the world cruelly gave out, seemed to Lionel rather below par in her understanding; strike from her talk its kindliness, and the residue was very like twaddle. After dinner, various members of the Vipont family dropped in — asked impromptu by Carr or by Lady Selina, in hasty three-cornered notes, to take the occasion of renewing their acquaintance with their distinguished connection. By some accident, among those invited, there were but few young single ladies; and by some other accident, those few were all plain. Honoria Vipont was unequivocally the belle of the room. It could not but be observed that Darrell seemed struck with her — talked with her more than any other lady; and when she went to the piano, and played that great air of Beethoven's, in which music seems to have got into a knot that only fingers the most artful can unravel, Darrell remained in his seat aloof and alone, listening, no doubt, with ravished attention. But just as the air ended, and Honoria turned round to look for him, he was gone.

Lionel did not linger long after him. The gay young man went, thence, to one of those vast crowds which seem convened for a practical parody of Mr. Bentham's famous proposition — contriving the smallest happiness for the greatest number.

It was a very great house, belonging to a very great person. Colonel Morley had procured an invitation for

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Lionel, and said, "Go; *you* should be seen there." Colonel Morley had passed the age of growing-into society — no such cares for the morrow could add a cubit to his conventional stature. One among a group of other young men by the door-way, Lionel beheld Darrell, who had arrived before him, listening to a very handsome young lady, with an attention quite as earnest as that which had gratified the superior mind of the well-educated Honoria. A very handsome young lady certainly, but not with a superior mind, nor supposed hitherto to have found young gentlemen "insipid." Doubtless she would henceforth do so. A few minutes after, Darrell was listening again —this time to another young lady, generally called "fast." If his attentions to her were not marked, hers to him were. She rattled on to him volubly, laughed, pretty hoyden, at her own sallies, and seemed at last so to fascinate him by her gay spirits, that he sate down by her side; and the playful smile on his lips — lips that had learned to be so gravely firm — showed that he could enter still into the mirth of childhood; for surely to the time-worn man the fast young lady must have seemed but a giddy child. Lionel was amused. Could this be the austere recluse whom he had left in the shades of Fawley? Guy Darrell, at his years, with his dignified repute, the object of so many nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles —could *he* descend to be that most frivolous of characters, a male coquette? Was he in earnest — was his vanity duped? Looking again, Lionel saw in his kinsman's face a sudden return of the sad despondent expression which had moved his own young pity in the solitudes of Fawley.

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But in a moment the man roused himself — the sad expression was gone. Had the girl's merry laugh again chased it away? But Lionel's attention was now drawn from Darrell himself to the observations murmured round him, of which Darrell was the theme.

"Yes, he is bent on marrying again! I have it from Alban Morley—immense fortune—and so young-looking, any girl might fall in love with such eyes and forehead; besides, what a jointure he could settle! . . . Do look at that girl, Flora Vyvyan, trying to make a fool of him. She can't appreciate that kind of man, and she would not be caught by his money — does not want it. . . . I wonder she is not afraid of him. He is certainly quizzing her. . . . The men think her pretty — I don't. . . . They say he is to return to Parliament, and have a place in the Cabinet. . . . No! he has no children living — very natural he should marry again. . . . A nephew! — you are quite mistaken. Young Haughton is no nephew — a very distant connection — could not expect to be the heir. . . . It was given out though, at Paris. The Duchess thought so, and so did Lady Jane. They'll not be so civil to young Haughton now. . . . Hush —"

Lionel, wishing to hear no more, glided by, and penetrated farther into the throng. And then, as he proceeded, with those last words on his ear, the consciousness came upon him that his position had undergone a change. Difficult to define it; to an ordinary by-stander, people would have seemed to welcome him cordially as ever.

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The gradations of respect in polite society are so exquisitely delicate, that it seems only by a sort of magnetism that one knows from day to day whether one has risen or declined. A man has lost high office, patronage, power, never, perhaps, to regain them. People don't turn their backs on him; their smiles are as gracious, their hands as flatteringly extended. But that man would be dull as a rhinoceros if he did not feel as every one who accosts him feels — that he has descended in the ladder. So with all else. Lose even your fortune, it is not the next day in a London drawing-room that your friends look as if you were going to ask them for five pounds. Wait a year or so for that. But if they have just heard you are ruined, you will *feel* that they have heard it, let them bow ever so courteously, smile ever so kindly. Lionel at Paris, in the last year or so, had been more than fashionable: he had been the fashion — courted, run after, petted, quoted, imitated. That evening he felt as an author may feel who has been the rage, and, without fault of his own, is so no more. The rays that had gilt him had gone back to the orb that lent. And they who were most genial still to Lionel Haughton, were those who still most respected thirty-five thousand pounds a-year — in Guy Darrell!

Lionel was angry with himself that he felt galled. But in his wounded pride there was no mercenary regret — only that sort of sickness which comes to youth when the hollowness of worldly life is first made clear to it. From the faces round him there fell that glamour by which the

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amour propre is held captive in large assemblies, where the *amour propre* is flattered. "Magnificent, intelligent audience," thinks the applauded actor. "Delightful party," murmurs the worshipped beauty. Glamour! glamour! Let the audience yawn while the actor mouths; let the party neglect the beauty to adore another, and straightway the "magnificent audience" is an "ignorant public," and "the delightful party" a "heartless world."

CHAPTER X.

Escaped from a London Drawing-room, flesh once more tingles, and blood flows.—Guy Darrell explains to Lionel Haughton why he holds it a duty to be — an old fool.

LIONEL HAUGHTON glided through the disenchanted rooms, and breathed a long breath of relief when he found himself in the friendless streets.

As he walked slow and thoughtful on, he suddenly felt a hand upon his shoulder, turned, and saw Darrell.

"Give me your arm, my dear Lionel; I am tired out. What a lovely night! What sweet scorn in the eyes of those stars that we have neglected for yon flaring lights!"

LIONEL. "Is it scorn — is it pity? Is it but serene indifference.

DARRELL. "As we ourselves interpret; if scorn be present in our own hearts, it will be seen in the disc of Jupiter. Man, egotist though he be, exacts sympathy

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from all the universe. Joyous, he says to the sun, 'Life-giver, rejoice with me.' Grieving, he says to the moon, 'Pensive one, thou sharest my sorrow.' Hope for fame; a star is its promise! Mourn for the dead; a star is the land of reunion! Say to Earth, 'I have done with thee;' to Time, 'Thou hast naught to bestow;' and all Space cries aloud, 'The earth is a speck, thine inheritance infinity. Time melts while thou sighest. The discontent of a mortal is the instinct that proves thee immortal.' Thus construing Nature, Nature is our companion, our consoler. Benign as the playmate, she lends herself to our shifting humors. Serious as the teacher, she responds to the steadier inquiries of reason. Mystic and hallowed as the priestess, she keeps alive by dim oracles that spiritual yearning within us, in which, from savage to sage — through all dreams, through all creeds — thrills the sense of a link with Divinity. Never, therefore, while conferring with Nature, is Man wholly alone, nor is she a single companion with uniform shape. Ever new, ever various, she can pass from gay to severe — from fancy to science — quick as thought passes from the dance of a leaf, from the tint of a rainbow, to the theory of motion, the problem of light. But lose Nature—forget or dismiss her —make companions, by hundreds, of men who ignore her, and I will not say with the poet, 'This is solitude.' But in the commune, what stale monotony, what weary sameness!"

Thus Darrell continued to weave together sentence with sentence, the intermediate connection of meaning often so

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subtle, that when put down on paper it requires effort to discern it. But it was his peculiar gift to make clear when spoken what in writing would seem obscure. Look, manner, each delicate accent in a voice wonderfully distinct in its unrivaled melody, all so aided the sense of mere words, that it is scarcely extravagant to say he might have talked an unknown language, and a listener would have understood. But, understood or not, those sweet intonations it was such delight to hear, that any one with nerves alive to music would have murmured, "Talk on forever." And in this gift lay one main secret of the man's strange influence over all who came familiarly into his intercourse; so that if Darrell had ever bestowed confidential intimacy on any one not by some antagonistic idiosyncracy steeled against its charm, and that intimacy had been withdrawn, a void never to be refilled must have been left in the life thus robbed.

Stopping at his door, as Lionel, rapt by the music, had forgotten the pain of the reverie so bewitchingly broken, Darrell detained the hand held out to him, and said, "No, not yet — I have something to say to you: come in; let me say it now."

Lionel bowed his head, and in surprised conjecture followed his kinsman up the lofty stairs into the same comfortless stately room that has been already described. When the servant closed the door, Darrell sank into a chair. Fixing his eyes upon Lionel with almost parental kindness, and motioning his young cousin to sit by his side, close, he thus began:

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"Lionel, before I was your age I was married—I was a father. I am lonely and childless now. My life has been moulded by a solemn obligation which so few could comprehend, that I scarce know a man living beside yourself to whom I would frankly confide it. Pride of family is a common infirmity—often petulant with the poor, often insolent with the rich; but rarely, perhaps, out of that pride do men construct a positive binding duty, which at all self-sacrifice should influence the practical choice of life. As a child, before my judgment could discern how much of vain superstition may lurk in our reverence for the dead, my whole heart was engaged in a passionate dream, which my waking existence became vowed to realize. My father!—my lip quivers, my eyes moisten as I recall him, even now — my father!—I loved him so intensely!—the love of childhood how fearfully strong it is! All in him was so gentle, yet so sensitive — chivalry without its armor. I was his constant companion: he spoke to me unreservedly, as a poet to his muse. I wept at his sorrows — I chafed at his humiliations. He talked of ancestors as he thought of them; to him they were beings like the old Lares — not dead in graves, but images ever present on household hearths. Doubtless he exaggerated their worth — as their old importance. Obscure, indeed, in the annals of empire, their deeds and their power, their decline and fall. Not so thought he; they were to his eyes the moon track in the ocean of history — light on the waves over which they had gleamed — all the ocean elsewhere dark! With him thought I; as my father spoke, his child

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believed. But what to the eyes of the world was this inheritor of a vaunted name? — a threadbare, slighted, rustic pedant — no station in the very province in which mouldered away the last lowly dwelling-place of his line. By lineage high above most nobles, in position below most yeomen. He had learning, he had genius; but the studies to which they were devoted only served yet more to impoverish his scanty means, and led rather to ridicule than to honor. Not a day but what I saw on his soft features the smart of a fresh sting, the gnawing of a new care. Thus, as a boy, feeling in myself a strength inspired by affection, I came to him, one day as he sate grieving, and kneeling to him, said, "Father, courage yet a little while; I shall soon be man, and I swear to devote myself as man to revive the old fading race so prized by you; to rebuild the House that, by you so loved, is loftier in my eyes than all the heraldry of kings.' And my father's face brightened, and his voice blessed me; and I rose up ambitious!" Darrell paused, heaved a short, quick sigh, and then rapidly continued:

"I was fortunate at the university. That was a day when chiefs of party looked for recruits among young men who had given the proofs, and won the first fruits of emulation and assiduity. For statesmanship then was deemed an art which, like that of war, needs early discipline. I had scarcely left college when I was offered a seat in Parliament by the head of the Viponts, an old Lord Montfort. I was dazzled but for one moment — I declined the next. The fallen House of Darrell needed

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wealth, and Parliamentary success, in its higher honors, often requires wealth — never gives it. It chanced that I had a college acquaintance with a young man named Vipont Crooke. His grandfather, one of the numberless Viponts, had been compelled to add the name of Crooke to his own on succeeding to the property of some rich uncle, who was one of the numberless Crookes. I went with that college acquaintance to visit the old Lord Montfort, at his villa near London, and thence to the country house of the Vipont Crookes. I staid at the last two or three weeks. While there, I received a letter from the elder Fairthorn, my father's bailiff, entreating me to come immediately to Fawley, hinting at some great calamity. On taking leave of my friend and his family, something in the manner of his sister startled and pained me — an evident confusion, a burst of tears — I know not what. I had never sought to win her affections. I had an ideal of the woman I could love. It did not resemble her. On reaching Fawley, conceive the shock that awaited me. My father was like one heart-stricken. The principal mortgagee was about to foreclose — Fawley about to pass forever from the race of the Darrells. I saw that the day my father was driven from the old house would be his last on earth. What means to save him? — how raise the pitiful sum — but a few thousands — by which to release from the spoiler's gripe those barren acres which all the lands of the Seymour or the Gower could never replace in my poor father's eyes? My sole income was a college fellowship, adequate to all my

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wants, but useless for sale or loan. I spent the night in vain consultation with Fairthorn. There seemed not a hope. Next morning came a letter from young Vipont Crooke. It was manly and frank, though somewhat coarse. With the consent of his parents he offered me his sister's hand, and a dowry of £10,000. He hinted, in excuse for his bluntness, that, perhaps from motives of delicacy, if I felt a preference for his sister, I might not deem myself rich enough to propose, and — but it matters not what else he said. You foresee the rest. My father's life could be saved from despair — his beloved home be his shelter to the last. That dowry would more than cover the paltry debt upon the lands. I gave myself not an hour to pause. I hastened back to the house to which fate had led me. But," said Darrell, proudly, "do not think I was base enough, even with such excuses, to deceive the young lady. I told her what was true; that I could not profess to her the love painted by romance-writers and poets; but that I loved no other, and that, if she deigned to accept my hand, I should studiously consult her happiness, and gratefully confide to her my own. I said also, what was true, that, if she married me, ours must be for some years a life of privation and struggle; that even the interest of her fortune must be devoted to my father while he lived, though every shilling of its capital would be settled on herself and her children. How I blessed her when she accepted me, despite my candor! — how earnestly I prayed that I might love, and cherish, and requite her!" Darrell paused, in evident

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suffering. "And, thank Heaven! I have nothing on that score wherewith to reproach myself. And the strength of that memory enabled me to bear and forbear more than otherwise would have been possible to my quick spirit, and my man's heart. My dear father! his death was happy — his home was saved — he never knew at what sacrifice to his son! He was gladdened by the first honors my youth achieved. He was resigned to my choice of a profession, which, though contrary to his antique prejudices, that allowed to the representative of the Darrells no profession but the sword, still promised the wealth which would secure his name from perishing. He was credulous of my future, as if I had uttered, not a vow, but a prediction. He had blessed my union, without foreseeing its sorrows. He had embraced my first-born — true, it was a girl, but it was one link onward from ancestors to posterity. And almost his last words were these: 'You *will* restore the race — you *will* revive the name! and my son's children will visit the antiquary's grave, and learn gratitude to him for all that his idle lessons taught to your healthier vigor.' And I answered: 'Father, your line shall not perish from the land; and when I am rich and great, and lordships spread far round the lowly hall that your life ennobled, I will say to your grandchildren, "Honor ye and your son's sons, while a Darrell yet treads the earth — honor him to whom I owe every thought which nerved me to toil for what you who come after me may enjoy."'

"And so the old man, whose life had been so smileless, died smiling."

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By this time Lionel had stolen Darrell's hand into his own — his heart swelling with childlike tenderness, and the tears rolling down his cheeks.

Darrell gently kissed his young kinsman's forehead, and, extricating himself from Lionel's clasp, paced the room, and spoke on while pacing it.

"I made, then, a promise; it is not kept. No child of mine survives to be taught reverence to my father's grave. My wedded life was not happy; its record needs no words. Of two children born to me, both are gone. My son went first. I had thrown my life's life into him — a boy of energy, of noble promise. 'Twas for him I began to build that baffled fabric — '*Sepulchri immemor.*' For him I bought, acre on acre, all the land within reach of Fawley — lands twelve miles distant. I had meant to fill up the intervening space — to buy out a mushroom Earl, whose woods and corn-fields lie between. I was scheming the purchase — scrawling on the county map — when they brought the news that the boy I had just taken back to school was dead — drowned bathing on a calm summer eve! No, Lionel. I must go on. *That* grief I have wrestled with — conquered. I was widowed then. A daughter still left — the first-born, whom my father had blessed on his death-bed. I transferred all my love, all my hopes, to her. I had no vain preference for male heirs. Is a race less pure that runs on through the female line? Well, my son's death was merciful compared to —" Again Darrell stopped — again hurried on. "Enough! all is forgiven in the grave! I was then still in the noon of man's life, free to form

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new ties. Another grief that I cannot tell you; it is not all conquered yet. And by that grief the last verdure of existence was so blighted, that — that — in short, I had no heart for nuptial altars — for the social world. Years went by. Each year I said, 'Next year the wound will be healed; I have time yet.' Now age is near, the grave not far; now, if ever, I must fulfill the promise that cheered my father's death-bed. Nor does that duty comprise all my motives. If I would regain healthful thought, manly action, for my remaining years, I must feel that one haunting memory is exorcised, and forever laid at rest. It can be so only — whatever my risk of new cares — whatever the folly of the hazard at my age — be so only by — by — " Once more Darrell paused, fixed his eyes steadily on Lionel, and, opening his arms, cried out, "Forgive me, my noble Lionel, that I am not contented with an heir like you; and do not you mock at the old man who dreams that woman may love him yet, and that his own children may inherit his father's home."

Lionel sprang to the breast that opened to him; and if Darrell had planned how best to remove from the young man's mind forever the possibility of one selfish pang, no craft could have attained his object like that touching confidence before which the disparities between youth and age literally vanished. And, both made equal, both elevated alike, verily I know not which at the moment felt the elder or the younger! Two noble hearts, intermingled in one emotion, are set free from all time save the present; par each with each, they meet as brothers twin-born.

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BOOK SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

Vignettes for the next Book of Beauty.

"I QUITE agree with you, Alban; Honoria Vipont is a very superior young lady."

"I knew you would think so!" cried the Colonel, with more warmth than usual to him.

"Many years since," resumed Darrell, with reflective air, "I read Miss Edgeworth's novels; and in conversing with Miss Honoria Vipont, methinks I confer with one of Miss Edgeworth's heroines — so rational, so prudent, so well-behaved—so free from silly romantic notions—so replete with solid information, moral philosophy, and natural history — so sure to regulate her watch and her heart to the precise moment, for the one to strike, and the other to throb — and to marry at last a respectable steady husband, whom she will win with dignity, and would lose with — decorum! A very superior girl, indeed." *

* Darrell speaks—not the author. Darrell is unjust to the more exquisite female characters of a Novelist, admirable for strength of sense, correctness of delineation, terseness of narrative, and lucidity of style—nor less admirable for the unexaggerated nobleness of sentiment by which some of her heroines are notably distinguished.

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"Though your description of Miss Vipont is satirical," said Alban Morley, smiling, in spite of some irritation, "yet I will accept it as panegyric; for it conveys, unintentionally, a just idea of the qualities that make an intelligent companion and a safe wife. And those are the qualities we must look to, if we marry at our age. We are no longer boys," added the Colonel, sententiously.

DARRELL. "Alas, no! I wish we were. But the truth of your remark is indisputable. Ah, look! Is not that a face which might make an octogenarian forget that he is not a boy? — what regular features! and what a blush!"

The friends were riding in the park; and as Darrell spoke, he bowed to a young lady, who, with one or two others, passed rapidly by in a barouche. It was that very handsome young lady to whom Lionel had seen him listening so attentively in the great crowd, for which Carr Vipont's family party had been deserted.

"Yes; Lady Adela is one of the loveliest girls in London," said the Colonel, who had also lifted his hat as the barouche whirled by, "and amiable too: I have known her ever since she was born. Her father and I are great friends — an excellent man, but stingy. I had much difficulty in arranging the eldest girl's marriage with Lord Bolton, and am a trustee in the settlements. If you feel a preference for Lady Adela, though I don't think she would suit you so well as Miss Vipont, I will answer for her father's encouragement and her consent. 'Tis no drawback to you, though it is to most of her admirers, when I add, 'There's nothing with her!'"

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"And nothing in her! which is worse," said Darrell. "Still, it is pleasant to gaze on a beautiful landscape, even though the soil be barren."

COLONEL MORLEY. "That depends upon whether you are merely the artistic spectator of the landscape, or the disappointed proprietor of the soil."

"Admirable!" said Darrell; "you have disposed of Lady Adela. So ho! so ho!" Darrell's horse (his old high-mettled horse, freshly sent to him from Fawley, and in spite of the five years that had added to its age, of spirit made friskier by long repose) here put down its ears—lashed out—and indulged in a bound which would have unseated many a London rider. A young Amazon, followed hard by some two or three young gentlemen and their grooms, shot by, swift and reckless as a hero at Balaklava. But with equal suddenness, as she caught sight of Darrell — whose hand and voice had already soothed the excited nerves of his steed — the Amazon wheeled round and gained his side. Throwing up her vail, she revealed a face so prettily arch — so perversely gay — with eye of radiant hazel, and fair locks half loosened from their formal braid—that it would have beguiled resentment from the most insensible—reconciled to danger the most timid. And yet there was really a grace of humility in the apologies she tendered for her discourtesy and thoughtlessness. As the girl reined her light palfrey by Darrell's side — turning from the young companions who had now joined her, their hackneys in a foam—and devoting to his ear all her lively overflow of

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happy spirits, not untempered by a certain deference, but still apparently free from dissimulation—Darrell's grand face lighted up—his mellow laugh, unrestrained, though low, echoed her sportive tones; her youth, her joyousness were irresistibly contagious. Alban Morley watched observant, while interchanging talk with her attendant comrades, young men of high *ton*, but who belonged to that *jeunesse dorée*, with which the surface of life patrician is frittered over—young men with few ideas, fewer duties — but with plenty of leisure—plenty of health — plenty of money in their pockets — plenty of debts to their tradesmen—daring at Melton—scheming at Tattersall's—pride to maiden aunts—plague to thrifty fathers—fickle lovers, but solid matches—in brief, fast livers, who get through their youth betimes, and who, for the most part, middle-aged before they are thirty—tamed by wedlock—sobered by the responsibilities that come with the cares of property and the dignities of rank — undergo abrupt metamorphosis into chairmen of quarter sessions — county members, or decorous peers — their ideas enriched as their duties grow—their opinions, once loose as willows to the wind, stiffening into the palisades of fenced propriety — valuable, busy men, changed as Henry V., when, coming into the cares of state, he said to the Chief Justice, "There is my hand;" and to Sir John Falstaff,

> "I know thee not, old man;
> Fall to thy prayers!"

But, meanwhile, the *élite* of this *jeunesse dorée* glittered

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round Flora Vyvyan: not a regular beauty like Lady Adela — not a fine girl like Miss Vipont, but such a light, faultless figure — such a pretty, radiant face — more womanly for affecting to be manlike — Hebe aping Thalestris. Flora, too, was an heiress — an only child — spoiled, willful—not at all accomplished (my belief is that accomplishments are thought great bores by the *jeunesse dorée*) — no accomplishment except horsemanship, with a slight knack at billiards, and the capacity to take three whiffs from a Spanish *cigarette*. That last was adorable — four offers had been advanced to her hand on that merit alone. (N.B. Young ladies do themselves no good with the *jeunesse dorée*, which, in our time, is a lover that rather smokes than "sighs like furnace," by advertising their horror of cigars.) You would suppose that Flora Vyvyan must be coarse — vulgar perhaps; not at all; she was *piquante* — original; and did the oddest things with the air and look of the highest breeding. Fairies can not be vulgar, no matter what they do; they may take the strangest liberties — pinch the maids, turn the house topsy-turvy; but they are ever the darlings of grace and poetry. Flora Vyvyan was a fairy. Not peculiarly intellectual herself, she had a veneration for intellect; those fast young men were the last persons likely to fascinate that fast young lady. Women are so perverse; they always prefer the very people you would least suspect — the antitheses to themselves. Yet is it possible that Flora Vyvyan can have carried her crotchets to so extravagant a degree as to have designed the conquest of

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Guy Darrell — ten years older than her own father? She, too, an heiress — certainly not mercenary; she who had already refused better worldly matches than Darrell himself was — young men, handsome men, with coronets on the margin of their note-paper and the panels of their broughams? The idea seemed preposterous; nevertheless, Alban Morley, a shrewd observer, conceived that idea, and trembled for his friend.

At last the young lady and her satellites shot off, and the Colonel said, cautiously, "Miss Vyvyan is — alarming."

DARRELL. "Alarming! the epithet requires construing."

COLONEL MORLEY. "The sort of girl who might make a man of your years really and literally — an old fool!"

DARRELL. "Old fool such a man must be if girls of any sort are permitted to make him a greater fool than he was before. But I think that, with those pretty hands resting on one's arm-chair, or that sunny face shining into one's study windows, one might be a very happy old fool—and that is the most one can expect!"

COLONEL MORLEY (checking an anxious groan). "I am afraid, my poor friend, you are far gone already. No wonder Honoria Vipont fails to be appreciated. But Lady Selina has a maxim — the truth of which my experience attests — 'the moment it comes to women, the most sensible men are the —'"

"Oldest fools!" put in Darrell. "If Mark Antony made such a goose of himself for that painted harridan Cleopatra, what would he have done for a blooming

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Juliet? Youth and high spirits! Alas! why are these to be unsuitable companions for us, as we reach that climax in time and sorrow — when to the one we are grown the most indulgent, and of the other have the most need? Alban, that girl, if her heart were really won — her wild nature wisely mastered—gently guided—would make a true, prudent, loving, admirable wife — "

"Heavens!" cried Alban Morley.

"To such a husband," pursued Darrell, unheeding the ejaculation, "as — Lionel Haughton. What say you?"

"Lionel — oh, I have no objection at all to that; but he's too young yet to think of marriage — a mere boy. Besides, if you yourself marry, Lionel could scarcely aspire to a girl of Miss Vyvyan's birth and fortune."

"Ho, not aspire! That boy, at least, shall not have to woo in vain from the want of fortune. The day I marry — if ever that day come — I settle on Lionel Haughton and his heirs five thousand a year; and if, with gentle blood, youth, good looks, and a heart of gold, that fortune does not allow him to aspire to any girl whose hand he covets, I can double it, and still be rich enough to buy a superior companion in Honoria Vipont — "

MORLEY. "Don't say buy —"

DARRELL. "Ay, and still be young enough to catch a butterfly in Lady Adela — still be bold enough to chain a panther in Flora Vyvyan. Let the world know — your world in each nook of its gaudy auction mart — that Lionel Haughton is no pauper cousin — no penniless fortune-hunter. I wish that world to be kind to him while

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he is yet young, and can enjoy it. Ah, Morley, Pleasure, like Punishment, hobbles after us, *pede claudo*. What would have delighted us yesterday does not catch us up till to-morrow, and yesterday's pleasure is not the morrow's. A pennyworth of sugar-plums would have made our eyes sparkle when we were scrawling pot-hooks at a preparatory school, but no one gave us sugar-plums then. Now, every day at dessert, France heaps before us her daintiest sugar-plums in gilt *bonbonnieres*. Do you ever covet them? I never do. Let Lionel have his sugar-plums in time. And as we talk, there he comes. Lionel, how are you?"

"I resign you to Lionel's charge now," said the Colonel, glancing at his watch. "I have an engagement — troublesome. Two silly friends of mine have been quarrelling —high words—in an age when duels are out of the question. I have promised to meet another man, and draw up the form for a mutual apology. High words are so stupid nowadays. No option but to swallow them up again if they were as high as steeples. Adieu for the present. We meet to-night at Lady Dulcett's concert?"

"Yes," said Darrell; "I promised Miss Vyvyan to be there, and keep her from disturbing the congregation. You, Lionel, will come with me."

LIONEL (embarrassed). "No; you must excuse me. I have long been engaged elsewhere."

"That's a pity," said the Colonel, gravely. "Lady Dulcett's concert is just one of the places where a young man should — be seen." Colonel Morley waved his hand

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with his usual languid elegance, and his hack cantered off with him, stately as a charger, easy as a rocking-horse.

"Unalterable man," said Darrell, as his eye followed the horseman's receding figure. "Through all the mutations on Time's dusty high road — stable as a milestone. Just what Alban Morley was as a school-boy he is now; and if mortal span were extended to the age of the patriarchs, just what Alban Morley is now Alban Morley would be a thousand years hence. I don't mean externally, of course; wrinkles will come — cheeks will fade. But these are trifles; man's body is a garment, as Socrates said before me, and every seven years, according to the physiologists, man has a new suit, fiber and cuticle, from top to toe. The interior being that wears the clothes is the same in Alban Morley. Has he loved, hated, rejoiced, suffered? Where is the sign? Not one. At school, as in life, doing nothing, but decidedly somebody — respected by small boys, petted by big boys — an authority with all. Never getting honors — arm and arm with those who did; never in scrapes — advising those who were; imperturbable, immovable, calm above mortal cares as an Epicurean deity. What can wealth give that he has not got? In the houses of the richest he chooses his room. Talk of ambition, talk of power—he has their rewards without an effort. True prime minister of all the realm he cares for; Good Society has not a vote against him — he transacts its affairs, he knows its secrets — he wields its patronage. Ever requested to do a favor — no man great enough to do him one. Incorruptible, yet

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versed to a fraction in each man's price; impeccable, yet confident in each man's foibles; smooth as silk, hard as adamant; impossible to wound, vex, annoy him—but not insensible; thoroughly kind. Dear, dear Alban! Nature never polished a finer gentleman out of a solider block of man!" Darrell's voice quivered a little as he completed in earnest affection the sketch begun in playful irony, and then, with a sudden change of thought, he resumed lightly.

"But I wish you to do me a favor, Lionel. Aid me to repair a fault in good breeding, of which Alban Morley would never have been guilty. I have been several days in London, and not yet called on your mother. Will you accompany me now to her house and present me?"

"Thank you, thank you! you will make her so proud and happy; but may I ride on and prepare her for your visit?"

"Certainly; her address is—"

"Gloucester Place, No. —."

"I will meet you there in half an hour."

CHAPTER II.

"Let Observation, with expansive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru,"

—and Observation will every where find, indispensable to the happiness of woman, A VISITING ACQUAINTANCE.

LIONEL knew that Mrs. Haughton would that day need more than usual forewarning of a visit from Mr. Darrell.

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For the evening of that day Mrs. Haughton proposed "to give a party." When Mrs. Haughton gave a party, it was a serious affair. A notable and bustling housewife, she attended herself to each preparatory detail. It was to assist at this party that Lionel had resigned Lady Dulcett's concert. The young man, reluctantly acquiescing in the arrangements by which Alban Morley had engaged him a lodging of his own, seldom or never let a day pass without gratifying his mother's proud heart by an hour or two spent in Gloucester Place, often to the forfeiture of a pleasant ride, or other tempting excursion, with gay comrades. Difficult in London life, and at the full of its season, to devote an hour or two to visits, apart from the track chalked out by one's very mode of existence—difficult to cut off an hour so as not to cut up a day. And Mrs. Haughton was exacting — nice in her choice as to the exact slice in the day. She took the prime of the joint. She liked her neighbors to see the handsome, elegant, young man dismount from his charger, or descend from his cabriolet, just at the witching hour when Gloucester Place was fullest. Did he go to a levee, he must be sure to come to her before he changed his dress, that she and Gloucester Place might admire him in uniform. Was he going to dine at some very great house, he must take her in his way (though no street could be more out of his way), that she might be enabled to say in the parties to which she herself repaired, "There is a great dinner at Lord So-and-so's to-day; my son called on me before he went there. If he had been disengaged, I should have asked permission to bring him here."

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Not that Mrs. Haughton honestly designed, nor even wished, to draw the young man from the dazzling vortex of high life into her own little currents of dissipation. She was much too proud of Lionel to think that her friends were grand enough for him to honor *their* houses by his presence. She had in this, too, a lively recollection of her lost Captain's doctrinal views of the great world's creed. The Captain had flourished in the time when Impertinence, installed by Brummell, though her influence was waning, still schooled her oligarchs, and maintained the etiquette of her court; and even when his *mésalliance* and his debts had cast him out of his native sphere, he lost not all the original brightness of an exclusive. In moments of connubial confidence, when owning his past errors, and tracing to his sympathizing Jessie the causes of his decline, he would say, "'Tis not a man's birth, nor his fortune, that gives him his place in society — it depends on his conduct, Jessie. He must not be seen bowing to snobs, nor should his enemies track him to the haunts of vulgarians. I date my fall in life to dining with a horrid man who lent me £100, and lived in Upper Baker Street. His wife took my arm from a place they called a drawing-room (the Captain as he spoke was on a fourth floor), to share some unknown food which they called a dinner (the Captain at that moment would have welcomed a rasher). The women went about blabbing — the thing got wind — for the first time my character received a soil. What is a man without character? and character once sullied, Jessie, a man becomes reckless.

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Teach my boy to beware of the first false step — no associations with *parvenus*. Don't cry, Jessie — I don't mean that he is to cut *you* — relations are quite different from other people — nothing so low as cutting relations. I continued, for instance, to visit Guy Darrell, though he lived at the back of Holborn, and I actually saw him once in brown beaver gloves. But he was a relation. I have even dined at his house, and met odd people there — people who lived also at the back of Holborn. But he did not ask me to go to *their* houses, and if he had, I must have cut him."

By reminiscences of this kind of talk Lionel was saved from any design of Mrs. Haughton's to attract his orbit into the circle within which she herself moved. He must come to the parties she gave—illumine or awe odd people *there*. That was a proper tribute to maternal pride. But had they asked him to their parties, she would have been the first to resent such a liberty.

Lionel found Mrs. Haughton in great bustle. A gardener's cart was before the street-door. Men were bringing in a grove of evergreens, intended to border the staircase, and make its exiguous ascent still more difficult. The refreshments were already laid out in the dining-room. Mrs. Haughton, with scissors in hand, was cutting flowers to fill the *epergne*, but darting to and fro, like a dragon-fly, from the dining-room to the hall, from the flowers to the evergreens.

"Dear me, Lionel, is that you? Just tell me, you who go to all those grandees, whether the ratafia-cakes should

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be opposite to the sponge-cakes, or whether they would not go better — thus — at cross-corners?"

"My dear mother, I never observed — I don't know. But make haste — take off that apron — have these doors shut — come up stairs. Mr. Darrell will be here very shortly. I have ridden on to prepare you.

"Mr. Darrell — TO-DAY! — How could you let him come? Oh, Lionel, how thoughtless you are! You should have some respect for your mother — I *am* your mother, Sir."

"Yes, my own dear mother — don't scold — I could not help it. He is so engaged, so sought after; if I had put him off to-day he might never have come, and — "

"Never have come! Who is Mr. Darrell, to give himself such airs? — Only a lawyer, after all," said Mrs. Haughton, with majesty.

"Oh, mother, that speech is not like you. He is our benefactor — our — "

"Don't, don't say more — I was very wrong — quite wicked — only my temper, Lionel dear. Good Mr. Darrell! I shall be so happy to see him — see him, too, in this house that I owe to him — see him by your side! I think I shall fall down on my knees to him."

And her eyes began to stream.

Lionel kissed the tears away fondly. "That's my own mother now, indeed — now I am proud of you, mother; and how well you look! — I am proud of that too."

"Look well! — I am not fit to be seen, this figure —

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though perhaps an elderly quiet gentleman like good Mr. Darrell does not notice ladies much. John, John, make haste with those plants. Gracious me! you've got your coat off! — put it on — I expect a gentleman — I'm at home, in the front drawing-room — no — that's all set out — the back drawing-room, John. Send Susan to me. Lionel, do just look at the supper-table; and what is to be done with the flowers, and — "

The rest of Mrs. Haughton's voice, owing to the rapidity of her ascent, which affected the distinctness of her utterance, was lost in air. She vanished at culminating point — within her chamber.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Haughton at home to Guy Darrell

THANKS to Lionel's activity, the hall was disencumbered—the plants hastily stowed away—the parlor closed on the festive preparations — and the footman in his livery waiting at the door — when Mr. Darrel arrived. Lionel himself came out and welcomed his benefactor's footstep across the threshold of the home which the generous man had provided for the widow.

If Lionel had some secret misgivings as to the result of this interview, they were soon and most happily dispelled. For, at the sight of Guy Darrell leaning so affectionately on her son's arm, Mrs. Haughton mechani-

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cally gave herself up to the impulse of her own warm, grateful, true woman's heart. And her bound forward —her seizure of Darrell's hand — her first fervent blessing — her after words, simple but eloquent with feeling — made that heart so transparent, that Darrell looked it through with respectful eyes.

Mrs. Haughton was still a pretty woman, and with much of that delicacy of form and outline which constitutes the gentility of person. She had a sweet voice too, except when angry. Her defects of education, of temper, or of conventional polish, were not discernible in the overflow of natural emotion. Darrell had come resolved to be pleased, if possible. Pleased he was, much more than he had expected. He even inly accepted for the deceased Captain excuses which he had never before admitted to himself. The linen-draper's daughter was no coarse presuming dowdy, and in her candid rush of gratitude there was not that underbred servility which Darrell had thought perceptible in her epistolary compositions. There was elegance too, void both of gaudy ostentation and penurious thrift, in the furniture and arrangements of the room. The income he gave to her was not spent with slatternly waste or on tawdry gewgaws. To ladies in general, Darrell's manner was extremely attractive — not the less winning because of a certain gentle shyness which, implying respect for those he addressed, and a modest undervaluing of his own merit, conveyed compliment and soothed self-love. And to that lady in especial such gentle shyness was the happiest good-breeding.

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In short, all went off without a hitch, till, as Darrell was taking leave, Mrs. Haughton was reminded by some evil genius of her evening party, and her very gratitude, longing for some opportunity to requite obligation, prompted her to invite the kind man to whom the facility of giving parties was justly due. She had never realized to herself, despite all that Lionel could say, the idea of Darrell's station in the world — a lawyer who had spent his youth at the back of Holborn, whom the stylish Captain had deemed it a condescension not to cut, might indeed become very rich; but he could never be the fashion. "Poor man," she thought, "he must be very lonely. He is not, like Lionel, a young dancing man. A quiet little party, with people of his own early rank and habits, would be more in his way than those grand places to which Lionel goes. I can but ask him — I ought to ask him. What would he say if I did not ask him? Black ingratitude indeed, if he were not asked!" All these ideas rushed through her mind in a breath, and as she clasped Darrell's extended hand in both her own, she said — "I have a little party to-night!" And paused — Darrell remaining mute, and Lionel not suspecting what was to ensue, she continued: "There may be some good music — young friends of mine — sing charmingly — Italian!"

Darrell bowed. Lionel began to shudder.

"And if I might presume to think it would amuse you, Mr. Darrell, oh, I should be so happy to see you! — so happy!"

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"Would you?" said Darrell, briefly. "Then I should be a churl if I did not come. Lionel will escort me. Of course, you expect him too."

"Yes, indeed. Though *he* has so many fine places to go to — and it can't be exactly what he is used to — yet he is such a dear good boy that he gives up all to gratify his mother."

Lionel, in agonies, turned an unfilial back, and looked steadily out of the window; but Darrell, far too august to take offense where none was meant, only smiled at the implied reference to Lionel's superior demand in the fashionable world, and replied, without even a touch of his accustomed irony — "And to gratify his mother is a pleasure I thank you for inviting me to share with him."

More and more at her ease, and charmed with having obeyed her hospitable impulse, Mrs. Haughton, following Darrell to the landing-place, added —

"And if you like to play a quiet rubber —"

"I never touch cards. I abhor the very name of them, ma'am," interrupted Darrell, somewhat less gracious in his tones.

He mounted his horse; and Lionel, breaking from Mrs. Haughton, who was assuring him that Mr. Darrell was not at all what she expected, but really quite the gentleman — nay, a much grander gentleman than even Colonel Morley — regained his kinsman's side, looking abashed and discomfited. Darrell, with the kindness which his fine quick intellect enabled him so felicitously to apply, hastened to relieve the young guardsman's mind.

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"I like your mother much — very much," said he, in his most melodious accents. "Good boy! I see now why you gave up Lady Dulcett. Go and take a canter by yourself, or with younger friends, and be sure that you call on me, so that we may be both at Mrs. Haughton's by ten o'clock. I can go later to the concert if I feel inclined."

He waved his hand, wheeled his horse, and trotted off toward the fair suburban lanes that still proffer to the denizens of London glimpses of rural fields, and shadows from quiet hedgerows. He wished to be alone; the sight of Mrs. Haughton had revived recollections of by-gone days — memory linking memory in painful chain — gay talk with his younger school-fellow — that wild Charlie now in his grave — his own laborious youth, resolute aspirings, secret sorrows — and the strong man felt the want of that solitary self-commune, without which self-conquest is unattainable.

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Haughton at home miscellaneously. Little parties are useful in bringing people together. One never knows whom one may meet.

GREAT kingdoms grow out of small beginnings. Mrs. Haughton's social circle was described from a humble center. On coming into possession of her easy income, and her house in Gloucester Place, she was naturally

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seized with the desire of an appropriate "visiting acquaintance." The accomplishment of that desire had been deferred a while by the excitement of Lionel's departure for Paris, and the IMMENSE TEMPTATION to which the attentions of the spurious Mr. Courtenay Smith had exposed her widowed solitude; but no sooner had she recovered from the shame and anger with which she had discarded that showy impostor, happily in time, than the desire became the more keen; because the good lady felt that, with a mind so active and restless as hers, a visiting acquaintance might be her best preservative from that sense of loneliness which disposes widows to lend the incautious ear to adventurous wooers. After her experience of her own weakness in listening to a sharper, and with a shudder at her escape, Mrs. Haughton made a firm resolve never to give her beloved son a father-in-law. No, she would distract her thoughts — she would have a VISITING ACQUAINTANCE. She commenced by singling out such families as at various times had been her genteelest lodgers — now lodging elsewhere. She informed them by polite notes of her accession of consequence and fortune, which she was sure they would be happy to hear; and these notes, left with the card of "Mrs. Haughton, Gloucester Place," necessarily produced respondent notes and correspondent cards. Gloucester Place then prepared itself for a party. The *ci-devant* lodgers urbanely attended the summons. In their turn they gave parties. Mrs. Haughton was invited. From each such party she bore back a new draught into her "social circle." Thus,

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long before the end of five years, Mrs. Haughton had attained her object. She had a "VISITING ACQUAINTANCE!" It is true that she was not particular; so that there was a new somebody at whose house a card could be left, or a morning call achieved — who could help to fill her rooms, or whose rooms she could contribute to fill in turn, she was contented. She was no tuft-hunter. She did not care for titles. She had no visions of a column in the *Morning Post*. She wanted, kind lady, only a vent for the exuberance of her social instincts; and being proud, she rather liked acquaintances who looked up to, instead of looking down on her. Thus Gloucester Place was invaded by tribes not congenial to its natural civilized atmosphere. Hengists and Horsas, from remote Anglo-Saxon districts, crossed the intervening channel, and insulted the British nationality of that salubrious district. To most of such immigrators Mrs. Haughton, of Gloucester Place, was a personage of the highest distinction. A few others of prouder status in the world, though they owned to themselves that there was a sad mixture at Mrs. Haughton's house, still, once seduced there, came again — being persons who, however independent in fortune, or gentle by blood, had but a small "visiting acquaintance" in town; fresh from economical colonization on the Continent, or from distant provinces in these three kingdoms. Mrs. Haughton's rooms were well lighted. There was music for some, whist for others, tea, ices, cakes, and a crowd for all.

At ten o'clock — the rooms already nearly filled, and

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Mrs. Haughton, as she stood at the door, anticipating with joy that happy hour when the stair-case would become inaccessible — the head attendant, sent with the ices from the neighboring confectioner, announced, in a loud voice, "Mr. Haughton — Mr. Darrell."

At that latter name a sensation thrilled the assembly — the name so much in every one's mouth at that period, nor least in the mouths of the great middle class, on whom — though the polite may call them "a sad mixture," cabinets depend — could not fail to be familiar to the ears of Mrs. Haughton's "visiting acquaintance." The interval between his announcement and his ascent from the hall to the drawing-room was busily filled up by murmured questions to the smiling hostess, "Darrell! what! *the* Darrell! Guy Darrell! greatest man of the day! A connection of yours? Bless me, you don't say so?" Mrs. Haughton began to feel nervous. Was Lionel right? Could the man who had only been a lawyer at the back of Holborn really be, now, such a very, very great man — greatest man of the day? Nonsense!

"Ma'am" — said one pale, puff-cheeked, flat-nosed gentleman, in a very large white waistcoat, who was waiting by her side till a vacancy in one of the two whist-tables should occur — "Ma'am, I'm an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Darrell. You say he is a connection of yours? Present me to him."

Mrs. Haughton nodded flutteringly, for, as the gentleman closed his request, and tapped a large gold snuff-box, Darrell stood before her — Lionel close at his side,

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looking positively sheepish. The great man said a few civil words, and was gliding into the room to make way for the press behind him, when he of the white waistcoat, touching Mrs. Haughton's arm, and staring Darrell full in the face, said, very loud: "In these anxious times public men dispense with ceremony. I crave an introduction to Mr. Darrell." Thus pressed, poor Mrs. Haughton, without looking up, muttered out, "Mr. Adolphus Poole—Mr. Darrell," and turned to welcome fresh comers.

"Mr. Darrell," said Mr. Poole, bowing to the ground, "this *is* an honor."

Darrell gave the speaker one glance of his keen eye, and thought to himself—"If I were still at the bar, I should be sorry to hold a brief for that fellow." However, he returned the bow formally, and, bowing again at the close of a highly complimentary address with which Mr. Poole followed up his opening sentence, expressed himself "much flattered," and thought he had escaped; but wherever he went through the crowd, Mr. Poole contrived to follow him, and claim his notice by remarks on the affairs of the day—the weather—the funds—the crops. At length Darrell perceived, sitting aloof in a corner, an excellent man, whom indeed it surprised him to see in a London drawing-room, but who, many years ago, when Darrell was canvassing the enlightened constituency of Ouzelford, had been on a visit to the chairman of his committee—an influential trader—and having connections in the town—and, being a very high character, had done him good service in the canvas. Dar-

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rell rarely forgot a face, and never a service. At any time he would have been glad to see the worthy man once more, but at that time he was grateful indeed.

"Excuse me," he said, bluntly, to Mr. Poole; "but I see an old friend." He moved on, and thick as the crowd had become, it made way with respect, as to royalty, for the distinguished orator. The buzz of admiration as he passed — louder than in drawing-rooms more refined — would have had sweeter music than Grisi's most artful quaver to a vainer man — nay, once on a time to him. But — sugar-plums come too late! He gained the corner, and roused the solitary sitter.

"My dear Mr. Hartopp, do you not remember me — Guy Darrell?"

"Mr. Darrell!" cried the ex-mayor of Gatesboro' rising, "who could think that you would remember *me*?"

"What! not remember those ten stubborn voters, on whom, all and singly, I had lavished my powers of argument in vain? You came, and with the brief words, 'John — Ned — Dick — oblige me — vote for Darrell!' the men were convinced — the votes won. That's what I call eloquence"—(*sotto voce*—"Confound that fellow! still after me!"—Aside to Hartopp)—"Oh! may I ask who is that Mr.— what's his name — there — in the white waistcoat?"

"Poole," answered Hartopp. "Who is he, Sir? A speculative man. He is connected with a new Company — I am told it answers. Williams (that's my foreman — a very long head he has too) has taken shares in the

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Company, and wanted me to do the same, but 'tis not in my way. And Mr. Poole may be a very honest man, but he does not impress me with that idea. I have grown careless; I know I am liable to be taken in — I was so once — and therefore I avoid 'Companies' upon principle — especially when they promise thirty per cent., and work copper mines — Mr. Poole has a copper mine."

"And deals in brass — you may see it in his face! But you are not in town for good, Mr. Hartopp? If I remember right, you were settled at Gatesboro' when we last met."

"And so I am still — or rather in the neighborhood. I am gradually retiring from business, and grown more and more fond of farming. But I have a family, and we live in enlightened times, when children require a finer education than their parents had. Mrs. Hartopp thought my daughter Anna Maria was in need of some 'finishing lessons' — very fond of the harp is Anna Maria — and so we have taken a house in London for six weeks. That's Mrs. Hartopp yonder, with the bird on her head — bird of paradise, I believe — Williams says that birds of that kind never rest. That bird is an exception — it has rested on Mrs. Hartopp's head for hours together, every evening since we have been in town."

"Significant of your connubial felicity, Mr. Hartopp."

"May it be so of Anna Maria's. She is to be married when her education is finished — married, by-the-by, to a son of your old friend Jessop, of Ouzelford—and between you and me, Mr. Darrell, that is the reason why I con-

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sented to come to town. Do not suppose that I would have a daughter finished unless there was a husband at hand who undertook to be responsible for the results."

"You retain your wisdom, Mr. Hartopp; and I feel sure that not even your fair partner could have brought you up to London unless you had decided on the expediency of coming. Do you remember that I told you the day you so admirably settled a dispute in our committee-room, 'It was well you were not born a king, for you would have been an irresistible tyrant.'"

"Hush! hush!" whispered Hartopp in great alarm, "if Mrs. Hartopp should hear you! What an observer you are, Sir! I thought *I* was a judge of character — but I was once deceived. I dare say you never were."

"You mistake," answered Darrell, wincing, "*you* deceived! How?"

"Oh, a long story, Sir. It was an elderly man — the most agreeable, interesting companion — a vagabond nevertheless — and such a pretty bewitching little girl with him, his grandchild. I thought he might have been a wild harum-scarum chap in his day, but that he had a true sense of honor" — (Darrell, wholly uninterested in this narrative, suppressed a yawn, and wondered when it would end). "Only think, Sir, just as I was saying to myself, 'I know character — I never was taken in,' down comes a smart fellow — the man's own son — and tells me — or rather he suffers a lady who comes with him to tell me — that this charming old gentleman of high sense of

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honor was a returned convict — been transported for robbing his employer."

Pale, breathless, Darrell listened, not unheeding now. "What was the name of — of — "

"The convict? He called himself Chapman, but the son's name was Losely — Jasper."

"Ah!" faltered Darrell, recoiling, "and you spoke of a little girl?"

"Jasper Losely's daughter; he came after her with a magistrate's warrant. The old miscreant had carried her off, to teach her his own swindling ways, I suppose. Luckily she was then in my charge. I gave her back to her father, and the very respectable-looking lady he brought with him. Some relation, I presume?"

"What was her name, do you remember?"

"Crane."

"Crane! Crane!" muttered Darrell, as if trying in vain to tax his memory with that name. "So he said the child was his daughter — are you sure?"

"Oh, of course he said so, and the lady too. But can you be acquainted with them, Sir?"

"I? no! Strangers to me except by repute. Liars — infamous liars! But have the accomplices quarreled — I mean the son and father — that the father should be exposed and denounced by the son?"

"I conclude so. I never saw them again. But you believe the father really was, then, a felon, a convict — no excuse for him — no extenuating circumstances? There was something in that man, Mr. Darrell, that made

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one love him — positively love him; and when I had to tell him that I had given up the child he trusted to my charge, and saw his grief, I felt a criminal myself."

Darrell said nothing, but the character of his face was entirely altered — stern, hard, relentless — the face of an inexorable judge. Hartopp, lifting his eyes suddenly to that countenance, recoiled in awe.

"You think I was a criminal!" he said, piteously.

"I think we are both talking too much, Mr. Hartopp, of a gang of miserable swindlers, and I advise you to dismiss the whole remembrance of intercourse with any of them from your honest breast, and never to repeat to other ears the tale you have poured into mine. Men of honor should crush down the very thought that approaches them to knaves!"

Thus saying, Darrell moved off with abrupt rudeness, and passing quickly back through the crowd, scarcely noticed Mrs. Haughton by a retreating nod, nor heeded Lionel at all, but hurried down the stairs. He was impatiently searching for his cloak in the back parlor, when a voice behind said, "Let me assist you, Sir — do;" and turning round with petulant quickness, he beheld again Mr. Adolphus Poole. It requires an habitual intercourse with equals to give perfect and invariable control of temper to a man of irritable nerves and frank character; and though, where Darrell really liked, he had much sweet forbearance, and where he was indifferent, much stately courtesy, yet, when he was offended, he could be extremely uncivil. "Sir," he cried, almost stamping his

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foot, "your importunities annoy me; I request you to cease them."

"Oh! I ask your pardon," said Mr. Poole, with an angry growl. "I have no need to force myself on any man. But I beg you to believe that if I presumed to seek your acquaintance, it was to do you a service, Sir — yes; a private service, Sir." He lowered his voice into a whisper, and laid his finger on his nose — "There's one Jasper Losely, Sir — eh? Oh, Sir, I'm no mischief-maker. I respect family secrets. Perhaps I might be of use, perhaps not."

"Certainly not to me, Sir," said Darrell, flinging the cloak he had now found across his shoulders, and striding from the house. When he entered his carriage, the footman stood waiting for orders. Darrell was long in giving them. "Any where for half an hour — to St. Paul's, then home."

But on returning from this objectless plunge into the city, Darrell pulled the check-string — "To Belgrave Square — Lady Dulcett's."

The concert was half over; but Flora Vyvyan had still guarded, as she had promised, a seat beside herself for Darrell, by lending it for the present to one of her obedient vassals. Her face brightened as she saw Darrell enter and approach. The vassal surrendered the chair. Darrell appeared to be in the highest spirits; and I firmly believe that he was striving to the utmost in his power — what? — to make himself agreeable to Flora Vyvyan? No; to make Flora Vyvyan agreeable to him-

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self. The man did not presume that a fair young lady could be in love with him; perhaps he believed *that*, at, his years, to be impossible. But he asked what seemed much easier, and was much harder — he asked to be himself in love.

CHAPTER V.

It is asserted by those learned men who have devoted their lives to the study of the manners and habits of insect society, that when a spider has lost its last web, having exhausted all the glutinous matter wherewith to spin another, it still protracts its innocent existence by obtruding its nippers on some less warlike but more respectable spider, possessed of a convenient home and an airy larder. Observant moralists have noticed the same peculiarity in the Man-Eater, or Pocket-Cannibal.

ELEVEN o'clock, A. M. Samuel Adolphus Poole, Esq., is in his parlor — the house one of those new dwellings which yearly spring up north of the Regent's Park — dwellings that, attesting the eccentricity of the national character, task the fancy of the architect and the gravity of the beholder — each tenement so tortured into contrast with the other, that, on one little rood of ground, all ages seem blended, and all races encamped. No. 1 is an Egyptian tomb — Pharaohs may repose there! No. 2 is a Swiss *chalet* — William Tell may be shooting in its garden! Lo! the severity of Doric columns — Sparta is before you! Behold that Gothic porch — you are rapt to the Norman days! Ha! those Elizabethan mullions — Sid-

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ney and Raleigh rise again! Ho! the trellises of China —come forth, Confucius and Commissioner Yeh! Passing a few paces, we are in the land of the Zegri and Abencerage —

"Land of the dark-eyed Maid and dusky Moor."

Mr. Poole's house is called Alhambra Villa! Moorish verandas — plate-glass windows, with cusped heads and mahogany sashes — a garden behind, a smaller one in front — stairs ascending to the door-way under a Saracenic portico, between two pedestaled lions that resemble poodles — the whole new and lustrous — in semblance stone, in substance stucco—cracks in the stucco denoting "settlements." But the house being let for ninety-nine years—relet again on a running lease of seven, fourteen, and twenty-one — the builder is not answerable for duration, nor the original lessee for repairs. Take it altogether, than Alhambra Villa masonry could devise no better type of modern taste and metropolitan speculation.

Mr. Poole, since we saw him, between four and five years ago, has entered the matrimonial state. He has married a lady of some money, and become a reformed man. He has eschewed the turf, relinquished belcher neckcloths and Newmarket coats — dropped his old bachelor acquaintances. When a man marries and reforms—especially when marriage and reform are accompanied with increased income, and settled respectably in Alhambra Villa — relations, before estranged, tender

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kindly overtures; the world, before austere, becomes indulgent. It was so with Poole—no longer Dolly. Grant that in earlier life he had fallen into bad ways, and, among equivocal associates, he had been led on by that taste for sporting which is a manly though a perilous characteristic of the true-born Englishman. He who loves horses is liable to come in contact with blacklegs. The racer is a noble animal; but it is his misfortune that the better his breeding the worse his company. Grant that in the stables Adolphus Samuel Poole had picked up some wild oats — he had sown them now. By-gones were by-gones. He had made a very prudent marriage. Mrs. Poole was a sensible woman — had rendered him domestic, and would keep him straight! His uncle Samuel, a most worthy man, had found him that sensible woman, and, having found her, had paid his nephew's debts, and adding a round sum to the lady's fortune, had seen that the whole was so tightly settled on wife and children that Poole had the tender satisfaction of knowing that, happen what might to himself, those dear ones were safe; nay, that if, in the reverses of fortune, he should be compelled by persecuting creditors to fly his native shores, law could not impair the competence it had settled upon Mrs. Poole, nor destroy her blessed privilege to share that competence with a beloved spouse. Insolvency itself, thus protected by a marriage-settlement, realizes the sublime security of VIRTUE immortalized by the Roman Muse:

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——"Repulsæ nescia sordidæ,
Intaminatis fulget honoribus,
Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ."

Mr. Poole was an active man in the parish vestry—he was a sound politician — he subscribed to public charities — he attended public dinners — he had votes in half a dozen public institutions — he talked of the public interests, and called himself a public man. He chose his associates among gentlemen in business — speculative, it is true, but steady. A joint-stock company was set up; he obtained an official station at its board, coupled with a salary — not large, indeed, but still a salary.

"The money," said Adolphus Samuel Poole, "is not my object; but I like to have something to do." I can not say how he did something, but no doubt somebody was done.

Mr. Poole was in his parlor, reading letters and sorting papers, before he departed to his office in the West End. Mrs. Poole entered, leading an infant who had not yet learned to walk alone, and denoting, by an interesting enlargement of shape, a kindly design to bless that infant, at no distant period, with a brother or sister, as the case might be.

"Come and kiss Pa, Johnny," said she to the infant.

"Mrs. Poole, I am busy," growled Pa.

"Pa's busy—working hard for little Johnny. Johnny will be the better for it some day," said Mrs. Poole, tossing the infant half up to the ceiling, in compensation for the loss of the paternal kiss.

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"Mrs. Poole, what do you want?"

"May I hire Jones's brougham for two hours to-day to pay visits? There are a great many cards we ought to leave; is there any place where I should leave a card for you, lovey — any person of consequence you were introduced to at Mrs. Haughton's last night? That great man they were all talking about, to whom you seemed to take such a fancy, Samuel, duck —"

"Do get out! that man insulted me, I tell you."

"Insulted you! No; you never told me."

"I did tell you last night coming home."

"Dear me, I thought you meant that Mr. Hartopp.

"Well, *he* almost insulted me, too. Mrs. Poole, you are stupid and disagreeable. Is that all you have to say?"

"Pa's cross, Johnny dear! poor Pa! — people have vexed Pa, Johnny — naughty people. We must go, or we shall vex him too."

Such heavenly sweetness on the part of a forbearing wife would have softened Tamburlane. Poole's sullen brow relaxed. If women knew how to treat men, not a husband, unhenpecked, would be found from Indos to the Pole! And Poole, for all his surly demeanor, was as completely governed by that angel as a bear by his keeper.

"Well, Mrs. Poole, excuse me. I own I am out of sorts to-day — give me little Johnny — there (kissing the infant, who in return makes a dig at Pa's left eye, and begins to cry on finding that he has not succeeded in digging it out) — take the brougham. Hush, Johnny —

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hush — and you may leave a card for me at Mr. Peckham's, Harley Street. My eye smarts horribly; that baby will gouge me one of these days."

Mrs. Poole has succeeded in stilling the infant, and confessing that Johnny's fingers are extremely strong for his age — but, adding, that babies will catch at whatever is very bright and beautiful, such as gold and jewels, and Mr. Poole's eyes, administers to the wounded orb so soothing a lotion of pity and admiration that Poole growls out quite mildly—"Nonsense, blarney—by-the-by, I did not say this morning that you should not have the rosewood chiffoniere."

"No, you said you could not afford it, duck; and when Pa says he can't afford it, Pa must be the judge — must not he, Johnny dear?"

"But, perhaps, I can afford it. Yes, you may have it; yes, I say, you *shall* have it. Don't forget to leave that card on Peckham—he's a moneyed man. There's a ring at the bell, who is it? Run and see."

Mrs. Poole obeyed with great activity, considering her interesting condition. She came back in half a minute.

"Oh, my Adolphus! oh, my Samuel! it is that dreadful-looking man who was here the other evening — staid with you so long. I don't like his looks at all. Pray, don't be at home."

"I must," said Poole, turning a shade paler, if that were possible. "Stop — don't let that girl go to the door, and you leave me." He snatched his hat and gloves, and putting aside the parlor maid, who had emerged from

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the shades below in order to answer the 'ring,' walked hastily down the small garden.

Jasper Losely was stationed at the little gate. Jasper was no longer in rags, but he was coarsely clad—clad as if he had resigned all pretense to please a lady's eye, or to impose upon a West-End tradesman—a check shirt—a rough pea-jacket, his hands buried in its pockets.

Poole started with well-simulated surprise. "What, you! I am just going to my office — in a great hurry at present."

"Hurry or not, I must and will speak to you," said Jasper, doggedly.

"What now? then, step in; — only remember I can't give you more than five minutes."

The rude visitor followed Poole into the back parlor, and closed the door after him.

Leaning his arms over a chair, his hat still on his head, Losely fixed his fierce eyes on his old friend, and said in a low, set, determined voice — "Now, mark me, Dolly Poole, if you think to shirk my business, or throw me over, you'll find yourself in Queer Street. Have you called on Guy Darrell, and put my case to him, or have you not?"

"I met Mr. Darrell only last night, at a very genteel party. (Poole deemed it prudent not to say by whom that genteel party was given, for it will be remembered that Poole had been Jasper's confidant in that adventurer's former designs upon Mrs. Haughton; and if Jasper knew that Poole had made her acquaintance, might

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he not insist upon Poole's reintroducing him as a visiting acquaintance?) "A very genteel party," repeated Poole. "I made a point of being presented to Mr. Darrell, and very polite he was at first."

"Curse his politeness — get to the point."

"I sounded my way very carefully, as you may suppose; and when I had got him into friendly chat, you understand, I began: Ah! my poor Losely, nothing to be done *there* — he flew off in a tangent — as much as desired me to mind my own business, and hold my tongue; and upon my life, I don't think there is a chance for you in that quarter."

"Very well — we shall see. Next, have you taken any steps to find out the girl, my daughter?"

"I have, I assure you. But you give me so slight a clew. Are you quite sure she is not in America after all?"

"I have told you before that that story about America was all bosh! a stratagem of the old gentleman's to deceive me. Poor old man," continued Jasper, in a tone that positively betrayed feeling — "I don't wonder that he dreads and flies me; yet I would not hurt him more than I have done, even to be as well off as you are — blinking at me from your mahogany perch like a pet owl with its crop full of mice. And if I would take the girl from him, it is for her own good. For if Darrell could be got to make a provision on her, and, through her, on myself, why, of course, the old man should share the benefit of it. And now that these infernal pains often keep me awake half the night, I can't always shut out the idea

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of that old man wandering about the world, and dying in a ditch. And that runaway girl — to whom, I dare swear, he would give away his last crumb of bread — ought to be an annuity to us both: Basta, basta! As to the American story — I had a friend at Paris, who went to America on a speculation; I asked him to inquire about this William Waife and his grand-daughter Sophy, who were said to have sailed for New York nearly five years ago, and he saw the very persons — settled in New York — no longer under the name of Waife, but their true name of Simpson, and got out from the man that they had been induced to take their passage from England in the name of Waife, at the request of a person whom the man would not give up, but to whom he said he was under obligations. Perhaps the old gentleman had done the fellow a kind turn in early life. The description of this *soi disant* Waife and his grandchild settles the matter; — wholly unlike those I seek; so that there is every reason to suppose they must still be in England, and it is your business to find them. Continue your search — quicken your wits — let me be better pleased with your success when I call again this day week — and meanwhile four pounds, if you please — as much more as you like."

"Why, I gave you four pounds the other day, besides six pounds for clothes; it can't be gone."

"Every penny."

"Dear, dear! can't you maintain yourself anyhow? Can't you get any one to play at cards? Four pounds!

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Why, with your talent for whist, four pounds are a capital?"

"Whom can I play with? Whom can I herd with? — Cracksmen and pickpockets. Fit me out; ask me to your own house; invite your own friends; make up a rubber, and you will then see what I can do with four pounds; and may go shares if you like, as we used to do."

"Don't talk so loud. Losely, you know very well that what you ask is impossible. I've turned over a new leaf."

"But I've still got your handwriting on the old leaf."

"What's the good of these stupid threats? If you really wanted to do me a mischief, where could you go to, and who'd believe you?"

"I fancy your wife would. I'll try. Hillo —"

"Stop — stop — stop. No row, here, Sir. No scandal. Hold your tongue, or I'll send for the police."

"Do! Nothing I should like better. I'm tired out. I want to tell my own story at the Old Bailey, and have my revenge upon you, upon Darrell, upon all. Send for the police."

Losely threw himself at length on the sofa — (new morocco, with spring cushions) — and folded his arms.

"You could only give me five minutes — they are gone, I fear. I am liberal. I give you your own time to consider. I don't care if I stay to dine; I dare say Mrs. Poole will excuse my dress."

"Losely, you are such a — fellow! If I do give you the four pounds you ask, will you promise to shift for yourself somehow, and molest me no more?"

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"Certainly not. I shall come once every week for the same sum. I can't live upon less — until — "

"Until what?"

"Until either you get Mr. Darrell to settle on me a suitable provision, or until you place me in possession of my daughter, and I can then be in a better condition to treat with him myself; for if I would make a claim on account of the girl, I must produce the girl, or he may say she is dead. Besides, if she be as pretty as she was when a child, the very sight of her might move him more than all my talk."

"And if I succeed in doing any thing with Mr. Darrell, or discovering your daughter, you will give up all such letters and documents of mine as you say you possess?"

"'Say — I possess!' I have shown them to you in this pocket-book. Dolly Poole — your own proposition to rob old Latham's safe."

Poole eyed the book, which the ruffian took out and tapped. Had the ruffian been a slighter man, Poole would have been a braver one. As it was — he eyed and groaned. "Turn against one's old crony! So unhandsome, so unlike what I thought you were!"

"It is you who would turn against me. But stick to Darrell, or find me my daughter, and help her and me to get justice out of him; and you shall not only have back these letters, but I'll pay you handsomely — handsomely, Dolly Poole. Zooks, Sir — I am fallen — but I am always a gentleman."

Therewith Losely gave a vehement slap to his hat,

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which, crushed by the stroke, improved his general appearance into an aspect so outrageously raffish, that but for the expression of his countenance the contrast between the boast and the man would have been ludicrous even to Mr. Poole. The countenance was too dark to permit laughter. In the dress, but the ruin of fortune — in the face, the ruin of man.

Poole heaved a deep sigh, and extended four sovereigns. Losely rose and took them carelessly. "This day week," he said — shook himself — and went his way.

CHAPTER VI.

French touches to the Three Vignettes for the Book of Beauty.

WEEKS passed — the London season was beginning — Darrell had decided nothing—the prestige of his position was undiminished—in politics, perhaps, higher. He had succeeded in reconciling some great men; he had strengthened, it might be saved, a jarring cabinet. In all this he had shown admirable knowledge of mankind, and proved that time and disuse had not lessened his powers of perception. In his matrimonial designs Darrell seemed more bent than ever upon the hazard—irresolute as ever on the choice of a partner. Still the choice appeared to be circumscribed to the fair three who had been subjected to Colonel Morley's speculative criticism — Lady Adela,

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Miss Vipont, Flora Vyvyan. Much *pro* and *con* might be said in respect to each. Lady Adela was so handsome that it was a pleasure to look at her; and that is much when one sees the handsome face every day — provided the pleasure does not wear off. She had the reputation of a very good temper; and the expression of her countenance confirmed it. There, panegyric stopped; but detraction did not commence. What remained was inoffensive commonplace. She had no salient attribute, and no ruling passion. Certainly she would never have wasted a thought on Mr. Darrell, nor have discovered a single merit in him, if he had not been quoted as a very rich man of high character in search of a wife; and if her father had not said to her—"Adela, Mr. Darrell has been greatly struck with your appearance — he told me so. He is not young, but he is still a very fine-looking man, and you are twenty-seven. 'Tis a greater distinction to be noticed by a person of his years and position than by a pack of silly young fellows, who think more of their own pretty faces than they would ever do of yours. If you did not mind a little disparity of years he would make you a happy wife; and, in the course of nature, a widow, not too old to enjoy liberty, and with a jointure that might entitle you to a still better match."

Darrell, thus put into Lady Adela's head, he remained there, and became an *idèe fixe*. Viewed in the light of a probable husband, he was elevated into an "interesting man." She would have received his addresses with gentle complacency; and, being more the creature of

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habit than impulse, would, no doubt, in the intimacy of connubial life, have blessed him, or any other admiring husband, with a reasonable modicum of languid affection. Nevertheless, Lady Adela was an unconscious impostor; for, owing to a mild softness of eye and a susceptibility to blushes, a victim ensnared by her beauty would be apt to give her credit for a nature far more accessible to the romance of the tender passions, than, happily perhaps for her own peace of mind, she possessed; and might flatter himself that he had produced a sensation which gave that softness to the eye, and that damask to the blush.

Honoria Vipont would have been a choice far more creditable to the good sense of so mature a wooer. Few better specimens of a young lady brought up to become an accomplished woman of the world. She had sufficient instruction to be the companion of an ambitious man — solid judgment to fit her for his occasional adviser. She could preside with dignity over a stately household—receive with grace distinguished guests. Fitted to administer an ample fortune, ample fortune was necessary to the development of her excellent qualities. If a man of Darrell's age were bold enough to marry a young wife, a safer wife among the young ladies of London he could scarcely find; for though Honoria was only three-and-twenty, she was as staid, as sensible, and as remote from all girlish frivolities as if she had been eight-and-thirty. Certainly, had Guy Darrell been of her own years, his fortune unmade, his fame to win, a lawyer re-

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siding at the back of Holborn, or a petty squire in the petty demesnes of Fawley, he would have had no charm in the eyes of Honoria Vipont. Disparity of years was in this case not his drawback but his advantage, since to that disparity Darrell owed the established name and the eminent station which made Honoria think she elevated her own self in preferring him. It is but justice to her to distinguish here between a woman's veneration for the attributes of respect which a man gathers round him, and the more vulgar sentiment which sinks the man altogether, except as the necessary fixture to be taken in with the general valuation. It is not fair to ask if a girl who entertains a preference for one of our toiling, stirring, ambitious sex, who may be double her age, or have a snub nose, but who looks dignified and imposing on a pedestal of state, whether she would like him as much if stripped of all his accessories, and left unredeemed to his baptismal register or unbecoming nose. Just as well ask a girl in love with a young Lothario if she would like him as much if he had been ugly and crooked. The high name of the one man is as much a part of him as good looks are to the other. Thus, though it was said of Madame de la Villière that she loved Louis XIV. for himself and not for his regal grandeur, is there a woman in the world, however disinterested, who believes that Madame de la Villière would have liked Louis XIV. as much if Louis XIV. had been Mr. John Jones! Honoria would not have bestowed her hand on a brainless, worthless nobleman, whatever his rank or wealth. She was

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above that sort of ambition; but neither would she have married the best-looking and worthiest John Jones who ever bore that British appellation, if he had not occupied the social position which brought the merits of a Jones within range of the eye-glass of a Vipont.

Many girls in the nursery say to their juvenile confidants, "I will only marry the man I love." Honoria had ever said, "I will only marry the man I respect." Thus it was her respect for Guy Darrell that made her honor him by her preference. She appreciated his intellect — she fell in love with the reputation which the intellect had acquired. And Darrell might certainly choose worse. His cool reason inclined him much to Honoria. When Alban Morley argued in her favor he had no escape from acquiescence, except in the turns and doubles of his ironical humor. But his heart was a rebel to his reason; and between you and me, Honoria was exactly one of those young women by whom a man of grave years ought to be attracted, and by whom, somehow or other, he never is; I suspect, because the older we grow the more we love youthfulness of character. When Alcides, having gone through all the fatigues of life, took a bride in Olympus, he ought to have selected Minerva, but he chose Hebe.

Will Darrell find his Hebe in Flora Vyvyan? Alban Morley became more and more alarmed by that apprehension. He was shrewd enough to recognize in her the girl of all others formed to glad the eye and plague the heart of a grave and reverend seigneur. As it might well

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not only flatter the vanity, but beguile the judgment, of a man who feared his hand would be accepted only for the sake of his money, that Flora, just at this moment, refused the greatest match in the kingdom — young Lord Vipont, son of the new Earl of Montfort — a young man of good sense, high character, well-looking as men go, heir to estates almost royal — a young man whom no girl on earth is justified in refusing. But would the whimsical creature accept Darrell? Was she not merely making sport of him, and if, caught by her arts, he, sage and elder, solemnly offered homage and hand to that *belle dedaigneuse* who had just doomed to despair a comely young magnate with five times his fortune, would she not hasten to make him the ridicule of London?

Darrell had, perhaps, his secret reasons for thinking otherwise, but he did not confide them even to Alban Morley. This much only will the narrator, more candid. say to the reader — if out of the three whom his thoughts fluttered round, Guy Darrell wished to select the one who would love him best — love him with the whole, fresh, unreasoning heart of a girl whose childish forwardness sprung from childlike innocence—let him dare the hazard of refusal and of ridicule; let him say to Flora Vyvyan, in the pathos of his sweet, deep voice, "Come, and be the spoiled darling of my gladdened age; let my life, ere it sink into night, be rejoiced by the bloom and fresh breeze of the morning!"

But to say it he must wish it; he himself must love — love with all the lavish indulgence, all the knightly tender-

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ness, all the grateful sympathizing joy in the youth of the beloved, when youth for the lover is no more, which alone can realize what we sometimes see, though loth to own it — congenial unions with unequal years. If Darrell feel not that love, woe to him; woe and thrice shame if he allure to his hearth one who might indeed be a Hebe to the spouse who gave up to her his whole heart in return for hers; but to the spouse who had no heart to give, or gave but the chips of it, the Hebe, indignant, would be worse than Erinnys!

All things considered, then, they who wish well to Guy Darrell must range with Alban Morley in favor of Miss Honoria Vipont. She proffering affectionate respect, Darrell responding by rational esteem. So, perhaps, Darrell himself thought; for whenever Miss Vipont was named he became more taciturn, more absorbed in reflection, and sighed heavily, like a man who slowly makes up his mind to a decision, wise but not tempting.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing much of that information which the wisest men in the world could not give, but which the Author can.

"DARRELL," said Colonel Morley, "you remember my nephew George as a boy? He is now the rector of Humberston; married — a very nice sort of woman — suits him. Humberston is a fine living; but his talents are

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wasted there. He preached for the first time in London last year, and made a considerable sensation. This year he has been much out of town. He has no church here as yet. I hope to get him one. Carr is determined that he shall be a Bishop. Meanwhile, he preaches at —— Chapel to-morrow. Come and hear him with me, and then tell me frankly — is he eloquent or not?"

Darrell had a prejudice against fashionable preachers, but to please Colonel Morley he went to hear George. He was agreeably surprised by the pulpit oratory of the young divine. It had that rare combination of impassioned earnestness, with subdued tones, and decorous gesture, which suits the ideal of ecclesiastical eloquence conceived by an educated English Churchman —

"Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

Occasionally the old defect in utterance was discernible; there was a gasp as for breath, or a prolonged dwelling upon certain syllables, which, occurring in the most animated passages, and apparently evincing the preacher's struggle with emotion, rather served to heighten the sympathy of the audience. But for the most part the original stammer was replaced by a felicitous pause — the pause as of a thoughtful reasoner, or a solemn monitor knitting ideas, that came too quick, into method, or chastening impulse into disciplined zeal. The mind of the preacher, thus not only freed from trammel, but armed for victory, came forth with that power which is peculiar to an original intellect — the power which suggests more than it demonstrates. He did not so much preach to his

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audience as wind himself through unexpected ways into the hearts of the audience; and they who heard suddenly found their hearts preaching to themselves. He took for his text, "Cast down, but not destroyed." And out of this text he framed a discourse full of true Gospel tenderness, which seemed to raise up comfort as the saving, against despair as the evil, principle of mortal life. The congregration was what is called "brilliant" — statesmen, and peers, and great authors, and fine ladies — people whom the inconsiderate believe to stand little in need of comfort, and never to be subjected to despair. In many an intent or drooping face in that brilliant congregation might be read a very different tale. But of all present there was no one whom the discourse so moved as a woman, who, chancing to pass that way, had followed the throng into the Chapel, and with difficulty obtained a seat at the far end; a woman who had not been within the walls of chapel or church for long years — a grim woman, in iron gray. There she sate, unnoticed, in her remote corner; and before the preacher had done, her face was hidden behind her clasped hands, and she was weeping such tears as she had not wept since childhood.

On leaving church Darrell said little more to the Colonel than this: "Your nephew takes me by surprise. The Church wants such men. He will have a grand career, if life be spared to him." Then he sank into a reverie, from which he broke abruptly — "Your nephew was at

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school with my boy. Had my son lived, what had been *his* career?"

The Colonel, never encouraging painful subjects, made no rejoinder.

"Bring George to see me to-morrow. I shrunk from asking it before: I thought the sight of him would too much revive old sorrows, but I feel I should accustom myself to face every memory. Bring him."

The next day the Colonel took George to Darrell's; but George had been pre-engaged till late at noon, and Darrell was just leaving home, and at his street-door, when the uncle and nephew came. They respected his time too much to accept his offer to come in, but walked beside him for a few minutes, as he bestowed upon George those compliments which are sweet to the ear of rising men from the lips of those who have risen.

"I remember you, George, as a boy," said Darrell, "and thanked you then for good advice to a school-fellow, who is lost to your counsels now." He faltered an instant, but went on firmly: "You had then a slight defect in utterance, which, I understood from your uncle, increased as you grew older; so that I never anticipated for you the fame that you are achieving. *Orator fit*—you must have been admirably taught. In the management of your voice, in the excellence of your delivery, I see that you are one of the few who deem that the Divine Word should not be unworthily uttered. The debater on beer bills may be excused from studying the orator's effects; but all that enforce, dignify, adorn, make the be-

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coming studies of him who strives by eloquence to people heaven; whose task it is to adjure the thoughtless, animate the languid, soften the callous, humble the proud, alarm the guilty, comfort the sorrowful, call back to the fold the lost. Is the culture to be slovenly where the glebe is so fertile? The only field left in modern times for the ancient orator's sublime conceptions, but laborious training, is the Preacher's. And I own, George, that I envy the masters who skilled to the Preacher's art an intellect like yours."

"Masters," said the Colonel, "I thought all those elocution masters failed with you, George. You cured and taught yourself. Did not you? No! Why, then, who was your teacher?"

George looked very much embarrassed, and, attempting to answer, began horribly to stutter.

Darrell, conceiving that a preacher whose fame was not yet confirmed, might reasonably dislike to confess those obligations to elaborate study, which, if known, might detract from his effect, or expose him to ridicule, hastened to change the subject. "You have been to the country, I hear, George; at your living, I suppose?"

"No. I have not been there very lately; travelling about."

"Have you seen Lady Montfort since your return?" asked the Colonel.

"I only returned on Saturday night. I go to Lady Montfort's, at Twickenham, this evening."

"She has a delightful retreat," said the Colonel

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"But if she wish to avoid admiration, she should not make the banks of the river her favorite haunt. I know some romantic admirers who, when she reappears in the world, may be rival aspirants, and who have much taken to rowing since Lady Montfort has retired to Twickenham. They catch a glimpse of her, and return to boast of it. But they report that there is a young lady seen walking with her — an extremely pretty one — who is she? People ask *me* — as if I knew every thing."

"A companion, I suppose," said George, more and more confused. "But, pardon me, I must leave you now. Good-by, uncle. Good-day, Mr. Darrell."

Darrell did not seem to observe George take leave, but walked on, his hat over his brows, lost in one of his frequent fits of abstracted gloom.

"If my nephew were not married," said the Colonel, "I should regard his embarrassment with much suspicion — embarrassed at every point, from his travels about the country to the question of a young lady at Twickenham. I wonder who that young lady can be — not one of the Viponts, or I should have heard. Are there any young ladies on the Lyndsay side? — Eh, Darrell?"

"What do I care — your head runs on young ladies," answered Darrell, with peevish vivacity, as he stopped abruptly at Carr Vipont's door.

"And your feet do not seem to run from them," said the Colonel; and, with an ironical salute, walked away, while the expanding portals ingulfed his friend.

As he sauntered up St. James's Street, nodding toward

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the thronged windows of its various clubs. The Colonel suddenly encountered Lionel, and, taking the young gentleman's arm, said, "If you are not very much occupied, will you waste half an hour on me? — I am going homeward."

Lionel readily assented, and the Colonel continued: "Are you in want of your cabriolet to-day, or can you lend it to me? I have asked a Frenchman, who brings me a letter of introduction, to dine at the nearest *restaurant* to which one can ask a Frenchman. I need not say that is Greenwich; and if I took him in a cabriolet, he would not suspect that he was taken five miles out of town."

"Alas! my dear Colonel, I have just sold my cabriolet."

"What! old-fashioned already? True, it has been built three months. Perhaps the horse, too, has become an antique in some other collection — silent — um! — cabriolet and horse both sold?"

"Both," said Lionel, ruefully.

"Nothing surprises me that man can do," said the Colonel, "or I should be surprised. When, acting on Darrell's general instructions for your outfit, I bought that horse, I flattered myself that I had chosen well. But rare are good horses — rarer still a good judge of them; I suppose I was cheated, and the brute proved a screw."

"The finest cab-horse in London, my dear Colonel, and every one knows how proud I was of him. But I wanted

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money, and had nothing else that would bring the sum I required. Oh, Colonel Morley, do hear me!"

"Certainly, I am not deaf, nor is St. James's Street. When a man says, 'I have parted with my horse because I wanted money,' I advise him to say it in a whisper."

"I have been imprudent, at least unlucky, and I must pay the penalty. A friend of mine — that is, not exactly a friend, but an acquaintance — whom I see every day — one of my own set — asked me to sign my name at Paris to a bill at three month's date, as his security. He gave me his honor that I should hear no more of it—he would be sure to take up the bill when due — a man whom I supposed to be as well off as myself! You will allow that I could scarcely refuse — at all events, I did not. The bill became due two days ago; my friend does not pay it, and indeed says he can not, and the holder of the bill calls on me. He was very civil — offered to renew it — pressed me to take my time, etc.; but I did not like his manner, and as to my friend, I find that, instead of being well off, as I supposed, he is hard up, and that I am not the first he has got into the same scrape—not intending it, I am sure. He's really a very good fellow, and, if I wanted security, would be it to-morrow, to any amount."

"I've no doubt of it — to any amount!" said the Colonel.

"So I thought it best to conclude the matter at once. I had saved nothing from my allowance, munificent as it is. I could not have the face to ask Mr. Darrell to re-

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munerate me for my own imprudence. I should not like to borrow from my mother — I know it would be inconvenient to her. I sold both horse and cabriolet this morning. I had just been getting the check cashed when I met you. I intend to take the money myself to the bill-holder. I have just the sum £200."

"The horse alone was worth that," said the Colonel, with a faint sigh — "not to be replaced. France and Russia have the pick of our stables. However, if it is sold, it is sold — talk no more of it. I hate painful subjects. You did right not to renew the bill—it is opening an account with Ruin; and though I avoid preaching on money-makers, or, indeed, any other (preaching is my nephew's vocation, not mine), yet allow me to extract from you a solemn promise never again to sign bills, nor to draw them. Be to your friend what you please except security for him. Orestes never asked Plyades to help him to borrow at fifty per cent. Promise me — your word of honor as a gentleman! Do you hesitate?"

"My dear Colonel," said Lionel, frankly, "I do hesitate. I might promise not to sign a money-lender's bill on my own account, though really I think you take rather an exaggerated view of what is, after all, a common occurrence —"

"Do I?" said the Colonel, meekly. "I'm sorry to hear it. I detest exaggeration. Go on. You might promise not to ruin yourself — but you object to promise not to help in the ruin of your friend."

"That is exquisite irony, Colonel," said Lionel, piqued;

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"but it does not deal with the difficulty, which is simply this: When a man whom you call friend — whom you walk with, ride with, dine with almost every day, says to you, 'I am in immediate want of a few hundreds—I don't ask you to lend them to me, perhap's you can't — but assist me to borrow—trust to my honor that the debt shall not fall on you,' why, then, it seems as if to refuse the favor was to tell the man you call friend that you doubt his honor; and though I have been caught once in that way, I feel that I must be caught very often before I should have the moral courage to say 'No!' Don't ask me, then, to promise — be satisfied with my assurance that in future, at least, I will be more cautious, and if the loss fall on me, why, the worst that can happen is to do again what I do now."

"Nay, you would not perhaps have another horse and cab to sell. In that case, you would do the reverse of what you do now — you would renew the bill — the debt would run on like a snow-ball — in a year or two you would owe, not hundreds, but thousands. But come in — here we are at my door."

The Colonel entered his drawing-room. A miracle of exquisite neatness the room was — rather effeminate, perhaps, in its attributes; but that was no sign of the Colonel's tastes, but of his popularity with the ladies. All those pretty things were their gifts. The tapestry on the chairs their work — the *sèvre* on the consoles — the clock on the mantle-shelf — the inkstand, paper-cutter, taper-stand on the writing-table — their birthday presents.

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Even the white woolly Maltese dog that sprang from the rug to welcome him — even the flowers in the *jardinier* — even the tasteful cottage-piano, and the very music-stand beside it — and the card-trays, piled high with invitations—were contributions from the forgiving sex to the unrequiting bachelor.

Surveying his apartment with a complacent air, the Colonel sank into his easy *fauteuil*, and drawing off his gloves leisurely, said —

"No man has more friends than I have — never did I lose one — never did I sign a bill. Your father pursued a different policy—he signed many bills — and lost many friends."

Lionel, much distressed, looked down, and evidently desired to have done with the subject. Not so the Colonel. That shrewd man, though he did not preach, had a way all his own, which was perhaps quite as effective as any sermon by a fashionable layman can be to an impatient youth.

"Yes," resumed the Colonel, "it is the old story. One always begins by being security to a friend The discredit of the thing is familiarised to one's mind by the false show of generous confidence in another. Then what you have done for a friend, a friend should do for you — a hundred or two would be useful now — you are sure to repay it in three months. To Youth the Future seems safe as the Bank of England, and distant as the Peaks of Himalaya. You pledge your honor that in three months you will release your friend. The three months

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expire. To release the one friend, you catch hold of another—the bill is renewed, premium and interest thrown into the next pay-day — soon the account multiplies, and with it the honor dwindles — your NAME circulates from hand to hand on the back of doubtful paper—your name, which, in all money transactions, should grow higher and higher each year you live, falling down every month like the shares in a swindling speculation. You begin by what you call trusting a friend, that is, aiding him to self-destruction — buying him arsenic to clear his complexion; you end by dragging all near you into your own abyss, as a drowning man would clutch at his own brother. Lionel Haughton, the saddest expression I ever saw in your father's face was when — when — but you shall hear the story."

"No, Sir; spare me. Since you so insist on it, I will give the promise — it is enough; and my father —"

"Was as honorable as you when he first signed his name to a friend's bill; and perhaps promised to do so no more as reluctantly as you do. You had better let me say on; if I stop now, you will forget all about it by this day twelvemonth; if I go on, you will never forget. There are other examples besides your father. I am about to name one."

Lionel resigned himself to the operation, throwing his handkerchief over his face as if he had taken chloroform.

"When I was young," resumed the Colonel, "I chanced to make acquaintance with a man of infinite whim and humor; fascinating as Darrell himself, though in a very

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different way. We called him Willy — you know the kind of man one calls by his Christian name, cordially abbreviated — that kind of man seems never to be quite grown up; and therefore never rises in life. I never knew a man called Willy after the age of thirty, who did not come to a melancholy end! Willy was the natural son of a rich, helter-skelter, cleverish, maddish, stylish, raffish, four-in-hand Baronet, by a celebrated French actress. The title is extinct now; and so, I believe, is that genus of stylish, raffish, four-in-hand Baronet. Sir Julian Losely —"

"Losely!" echoed Lionel.

"Yes; do you know the name?"

"I never heard it till yesterday. I want to tell you what I did hear then — but after your story — go on."

"Sir Julian Losely (Willy's father) lived with the French lady as his wife, and reared Willy in his house, with as much pride and fondness as if he intended him for his heir. The poor boy, I suspect, got but little regular education; though, of course, he spoke his French mother's tongue like a native; and, thanks also perhaps to his mother, he had an extraordinary talent for mimicry and acting. His father was passionately fond of private theatricals, and Willy had early practice in that line. I once saw him act Falstaff in a country-house, and I doubt if Quin could have acted it better. Well, when Willy was still a mere boy, he lost his mother, the actress. Sir Julian married — had a legitimate daughter — died intestate — and the daughter, of course, had the personal property,

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which was not much; the heir-at-law got the land, and poor Willy nothing. But Willy was a universal favorite with his father's old friends — wild fellows like Sir Julian himself; among them there were two cousins, with large country-houses, sporting men, and bachelors. They shared Willy between them, and quarreled which should have the most of him. So he grew up to be man, with no settled provision, but always welcome, not only to the two cousin's, but at every house in which, like Milton's lark, 'he came to startle the dull night' — the most amusing companion! — a famous shot — a capital horseman — knew the ways of all animals, fishes, and birds; I verily believe he could have coaxed a pug-dog to point, and an owl to sing. Void of all malice, up to all fun. Imagine how much people would court, and how little they would do for, a Willy of that sort. Do I bore you?"

"On the contrary, I am greatly interested."

"One thing a Willy, if a Willy could be wise, ought to do for himself — keep single. A wedded Willy is in a false position. My Willy wedded — for love, too — an amiable girl, I believe — (I never saw her; it was long afterward that I knew Willy) — but as poor as himself. The friends and relatives then said — 'This is serious; something *must* be done for Willy.' It was easy to say, 'something must be done,' and monstrous difficult to do it. While the relations were consulting, his half-sister, the Baronet's lawful daughter, died, unmarried; and, though she had ignored him in life, left him £2000. 'I have hit it now,' cried one of the cousins. 'Willy is fond of a country life.

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I will let him have a farm on a nominal rent, his £2000 will stock it; and his farm, which is surrounded by woods, will be a capital hunting meet. As long as I live Willy shall be mounted.'

"Willy took the farm, and astonished his friends by attending to it. It was just beginning to answer when his wife died, leaving him only one child — a boy; and her death made him so melancholy that he could no longer attend to his farm. He threw it up; invested the proceeds as a capital, and lived on the interest as a gentleman at large. He travelled over Europe for some time — chiefly on foot — came back, having recovered his spirits — resumed his old, desultory, purposeless life at different country-houses; and at one of those houses I and Charles Haughton met him. Here I pause, to state that Will Losely at that time impressed me with the idea that he was a thoroughly honest man. Though he was certainly no formalist — though he had lived with wild sets of convivial scapegraces — though, out of sheer high spirits, he would now and then make conventional Proprieties laugh at their own long faces; yet, I should have said, that Bayard himself — and Bayard was no saint — could not have been more incapable of a disloyal, rascally, shabby action. Nay, in the plain matter of integrity, his ideas might be called refined, almost Quixotic. If asked to give or to lend, Willy's hand was in his pocket in an instant; but though thrown among rich men — careless as himself — Willy never put his hand into their pockets, never borrowed, never owed. He would accept hospitality — make

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frank use of your table, your horses, your dogs — but your money, no! He repaid all he took from a host by rendering himself the pleasantest guest that host ever entertained. Poor Willy! I think I see his quaint smile brimming over with sly sport! The sound of his voice was like a cry of 'half holiday' in a school-room. He dishonest! I should as soon have suspected the noonday sun of being a dark lantern! I remember, when he and I were walking home from wild-duck shooting in advance of our companions, a short conversation between us that touched me greatly, for it showed that, under all his levity, there were sound sense and right feeling. I asked him about his son, then a boy at school. 'Why, as it was the Christmas vacation, he had refused our host's suggestion to let the lad come down there?" 'Ah,' said he, 'don't fancy that I will lead my son to grow up a scatter-brained good-for-naught like his father. His society is the joy of my life; whenever I have enough in my pockets to afford myself that joy, I go and hire a quiet lodging close by his school, to have him with me from Saturday till Monday all to myself — where he never hears wild fellows call me "Willy," and ask me to mimic. I had hoped to have spent this vacation with him in that way. But his school-bill was higher than usual, and after paying it I had not a guinea to spare—obliged to come here where they lodge and feed me for nothing; the boy's uncle on the mother's side — a respectable man in business — kindly takes him home for the holidays; but did not ask me, because his wife — and I don't blame her — thinks I'm too wild for a city clerk's sober household.'

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"I asked Will Losely what he meant to do with his son, and hinted that I might get the boy a commission in the army without purchase.

"'No,' said Willy, 'I know what it is to set up for a gentleman on the capital of a beggar. It is to be a shuttlecock between discontent and temptation. I would not have my lost wife's son waste his life as I have done. He would be more spoiled, too, than I have been. The handsomest boy you ever saw—and bold as a lion. Once in that set'—(pointing over his shoulders toward some of our sporting comrades, whose loud laughter every now and then reached our ears)—'once in that set he would never be out of it—fit for nothing. I swore to his mother, on her death-bed, that I would bring him up to avoid my errors—that he should be no hanger-on and led-Captain! Swore to her that he should be reared according to his real station—the station of his mother's kin (*I* have no station)—and if I can but see him an honest British trader—respectable, upright, equal to the highest—because no rich man's dependent, and no poor man's jest—my ambition will be satisfied. And now you understand, Sir, why my boy is not here.' You would say a father who spoke thus had a man's honest stuff in him. Eh, Lionel?"

"Yes, and a true gentleman's heart, too!"

"So I thought; yet I fancied I knew the world! After that conversation I quitted our host's roof, and only once or twice afterward, at country houses, met William Losely again. To say truth, his chief patrons and friends were

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not exactly in my set. But your father continued to see Willy pretty often. They took a great fancy to each other. Charlie, you know, was jovial—fond of private theatricals, too; in short, they became great allies. Some years after, as ill luck would have it, Charles Haughton, while selling off his Middlesex property, was in immediate want of £1200. He could get it on a bill, but not without security. His bills were already rather down in the market, and he had already exhausted most of the friends whose security was esteemed by accommodators any better than his own. In an evil hour he had learned that poor Willy had just £1500 out upon mortgage; and the money-lender, who was lawyer for the property on which the mortgage was, knew it too. It was on the interest of this £1500 that Willy lived, having spent the rest of his little capital in settling his son as a clerk in a first-rate commercial house. Charles Haughton went down to shoot at the house where Willy was a guest — shot with him—drank with him—talked with him—proved to him, no doubt, that long before the three months were over the Middlesex property would be sold, the bill taken up; Willy might trust to his honor. Willy did trust. Like you, my dear Lionel, he had not the moral courage to say 'No.' Your father, I am certain, meant to repay him; your father never in cold blood meant to defraud any human being; but — your father gambled! A debt of honor at *piquet* preceded the claim of a bill-discounter. The £1200 were forestalled — your father was penniless. The money-lender came upon Willy. Sure that Charles

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Haughton would yet redeem his promise, Willy renewed the bill another three months on usurious terms; those months over, he came to town to find your father hiding between four walls, unable to stir out for fear of arrest. Willy had no option but to pay the money; and when your father knew that it was so paid, and that the usury had swallowed up the whole of Willy's little capital, then, I say, I saw upon Charles Haughton's once radiant face the saddest expression I ever saw on mortal man's. And sure I am that all the joys your father ever knew as a man of pleasure were not worth the agony and remorse of that moment. I respect your emotion, Lionel, but you begin as your father began; and if I had not told you this story, you might have ended as your father ended."

Lionel's face remained covered, and it was only by choking gasps that he interrupted the Colonel's narrative. "Certainly," resumed Alban Morley, in a reflective tone, "certainly that villain — I mean William Losely, for villain he afterward proved to be — had the sweetest, most forgiving temper! He might have gone about to his kinsmen and friends denouncing Charles Haughton, and saying by what solemn promises he had been undone. But no! such a story, just at that moment, would have crushed Charles Haughton's last chance of ever holding up his head again; and Charles told me (for it was through Charles that I knew the tale) that Willy's parting words to him were, 'Do not fret, Charlie. After all, my boy is now settled in life, and I am a cat with nine

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lives, and should fall on my legs if thrown out of a garret window. Don't fret.' So he kept the secret, and told the money-lender to hold his tongue. Poor Willy! I never asked a rich friend to lend me money but once in my life. It was then. I went to Guy Darrell, who was in full practice, and said to him, 'Lend me one thousand pounds. I may never repay you.' 'Five thousand pounds, if you like it,' said he. 'One will do.' I took the money, and sent it to Willy. Alas! he returned it, writing word that 'Providence had been very kind to him; he had just been appointed to a capital place, with a magnificent salary. The cat had fallen on its legs.' He bade me comfort Haughton with that news. The money went back into Darrell's pocket, and perhaps wandered thence to Charles Haughton's creditors. Now for the appointment. At the country house, to which Willy had returned destitute, he had met a stranger (no relation) who said to him, 'You live with these people — shoot their game — break in their horses — see to their farms — and they give you nothing! You are no longer very young — you should lay by your little income, and add to it. Live with me, and I will give you £300 a year. I am parting with my steward — take his place, but be my friend.' William Losely, of course, closed with the proposition. This gentleman, whose name was Gunston, I had known slightly in former times (people say I know every body)—a soured, bilious, melancholy, indolent, misanthropical old bachelor. With a magnificent place universally admired, and a large estate universally envied, he lived much alone, ruminating

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on the bitterness of life and the nothingness of worldly blessings. Meeting Willy at the country house to which, by some predestined relaxation of misanthropy, he had been decoyed, for the first time for years Mr. Gunston was heard to laugh. He said to himself, 'Here is a man who actually amuses me.' William Losely contrived to give the misanthrope a new zest of existence; and when he found that business could be made pleasant, the rich man conceived an interest in his own house, gardens, property. For the sake of William's merry companionship he would even ride over his farms, and actually carried a gun. Meanwhile the property, I am told, was really well managed. Ah! that fellow Willy was a born genius, and could have managed every body's affairs except his own. I heard of all this with pleasure (people say I hear every thing) — when one day a sporting man seizes me by the button at Tattersall's — 'Do you know the news? Will Losely is in prison on a charge of robbing his employer!'"

"Robbing! incredible!" exclaimed Lionel.

"My dear Lionel, it was after hearing that news that I established as invariable my grand maxim, *Nil admirari* — never to be astonished at anything!"

"But of course he was innocent?"

"On the contrary, he confessed, was committed; pleaded guilty, and was transported! People who knew Willy, said that Gunston ought to have declined to drag him before a magistrate, or, at the subsequent trial, have abstained from giving evidence against him; that Willy had been till then a faithful steward; the whole proceeds

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of the estate had passed through his hands; he might, in transactions for timber, have cheated, undetected, to twice the amount of the alleged robbery; it must have been a momentary aberration of reason; the rich man should have let him off. But I side with the rich man. His last belief in his species was annihilated. He must have been inexorable. He could never be amused, never be interested again. He *was* inexorable and — vindictive."

"But what were the facts? — what was the evidence?"

"Very little came out on the trial; because, in pleading guilty, the court had merely to consider the evidence which had sufficed to commit him. The trial was scarcely noticed in the London papers. William Losely was not like a man known about town. His fame was confined to those who resorted to old-fashioned country houses, chiefly single men, for the sake of sport. But stay. I felt such an interest in the case that I made an abstract or *precis*, not only of all that appeared, but all that I could learn of its leading circumstances. 'Tis a habit of mine, whenever any of my acquaintances embroil themselves with the Crown —" The Colonel rose, unlocked a small glazed book-case, selected from the contents a MS. volume, reseated himself, turned the pages, found the place sought, and, reading from it, resumed his narrative. "'One evening Mr. Gunston came to William Losely's private apartment. Losely had two or three rooms appropriated to himself in one side of the house, which was built in a quadrangle round a court-yard. When Losely opened his door to Mr. Gunston's knock, it struck Mr. Gunston

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that his manner seemed confused. After some talk on general subjects, Losely said that he had occasion to go to London next morning for a few days on private business of his own. This annoyed Mr. Gunston. He observed that Losely's absence just then would be inconvenient. He reminded him that a tradesman, who lived at a distance, was coming over the next day to be paid for a vinery he had lately erected, and on the charge for which there was a dispute. Could not Losely at least stay to settle it? Losely replied, "That he had already, by correspondence, adjusted the dispute, having suggested deductions which the tradesman had agreed to, and that Mr. Gunston would only have to give a check for the balance—viz.: £270." Thereon Mr. Gunston remarked, "If you were not in the habit of paying my bills for me out of what you receive, you would know that I seldom give checks. I certainly shall not give one now, for I have the money in the house." Losely observed, "That is a bad habit of yours, keeping large sums in your own house. You may be robbed." Gunston answered, "Safer than lodging large sums in a country bank. Country banks break. My grandfather lost £1000 by the failure of a country bank; and my father, therefore, always took his payments in cash, remitting them to London from time to time as he went thither himself. I do the same, and I have never been robbed of a farthing that I know of. Who would rob a great house like this, full of men-servants?" "That's true," said Losely; "so if you are sure you have as much by you, you will pay the bill, and

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have done with it. I shall be back before Sparks the builder comes to be paid for the new barns to the home farm — that will be £600; but I shall be taking money for timber next week. He can be paid out of that." GUNSTON. "No, I will pay Sparks, too, out of what I have in my bureau; and the timber-merchant can pay his debt into my London banker's." LOSELY. "Do you mean that you have enough for both these bills actually in the house?" GUNSTON. "Certainly, in the bureau in my study. I don't know how much I've got. It may be £1500 — it may be £1700. I have not counted; I am such a bad man of business; but I am sure it is more than £1400." Losely made some jocular observation to the effect that if Gunston never kept an account of what he had, he could never tell whether he was robbed, and, therefore, never would be robbed; since, according to Othello:

> "He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen,
> Let him not know it, and he's not robbed at all."

After that, Losely became absent in manner, and seemed impatient to get rid of Mr. Gunston, hinting that he had the labor-book to look over, and some orders to write out for the bailiff, and that he should start early the next morning.'"

Here the Colonel looked up from his MS., and said, episodically, "Perhaps you will fancy that these dialogues are invented by me after the fashion of the ancient historians? Not so. I give you the report of what passed, as Gunston repeated it *verbatim;* and I suspect that his

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memory was pretty accurate. Well" (here Alban returned to his MS.), "'Gunston left Willy, and went into his own study, where he took tea by himself. When his valet brought it in, he told the man that Mr. Losely was going to town early the next morning, and ordered the servant to see himself that coffee was served to Mr. Losely before he went. The servant observed "that Mr. Losely had seemed much out of sorts lately, and that it was perhaps some unpleasant affair connected with the gentleman who had come to see him two days before." Gunston had not heard of such a visit. Losely had not mentioned it. When the servant retired, Gunston, thinking over Losely's quotation respecting his money, resolved to ascertain what he had in his bureau. He opened it, examined the drawers, and found, stowed away in different places at different times, a larger sum than he had supposed — gold and notes to the amount of £1975, of which nearly £300 were in sovereigns. He smoothed the notes carefully; and, for want of other occupation, and with the view of showing Losely that he could profit by a hint, he entered the numbers of the notes in his pocket-book, placed them all together in one drawer with the gold, relocked his bureau, and went shortly afterward to bed. The next day (Losely having gone in the morning) the tradesman came to be paid for the vinery. Gunston went to his bureau, took out his notes, and found £250 were gone. He could hardly believe his senses. Had he made a mistake in counting? No. There was his pocket-book, the missing notes entered duly therein.

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Then he recounted the sovereigns, 142 were gone of them —nearly £400 in all thus abstracted. He refused at first to admit suspicion of Losely; but, on interrogating his servants, the valet deposed, that he was disturbed about two o'clock in the morning by the bark of the house-dog, which was let loose of a night within the front court-yard of the house. Not apprehending robbers, but fearing the dog might also disturb his master, he got out of his window (being on the ground-floor) to pacify the animal; that he then saw, in the opposite angle of the building, a light moving along the casement of the passage between Losely's rooms and Mr. Gunston's study. Surprised at this, at such an hour, he approached that part of the building, and saw the light very faintly through the chinks in the shutters of the study. The passage windows had no shutters, being old-fashioned stone mullions. He waited by the wall a few minutes, when the light again reappeared in the passage; and he saw a figure in a cloak, which, being in a peculiar color, he recognized at once as Losely's, pass rapidly along; but before the figure had got half through the passage, the light was extinguished, and the servant could see no more. But so positive was he, from his recognition of the cloak, that the man was Losely, that he ceased to feel alarm or surprise, thinking, on reflection, that Losely, sitting up later than usual to transact business before his departure, might have gone into his employer's study for any book or paper which he might have left there. The dog began barking again, and seemed anxious to get out of the

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court-yard to which he was confined; but the servant gradually appeased him — went to bed, and somewhat overslept himself. When he woke, he hastened to take the coffee into Losely's room, but Losely was gone. Here there was another suspicious circumstance. It had been a question how the bureau had been opened, the key being safe in Gunston's possession, and there being no sign of force. The lock was one of those rude, old-fashioned ones which are very easily picked, but to which a modern key does not readily fit. In the passage there was found a long nail crooked at the end; and that nail the superintendent of the police (who had been summoned) had the wit to apply to the lock of the bureau, and it unlocked and relocked it easily. It was clear that whoever had so shaped the nail could not have used such an instrument for the first time, and must be a practiced picklock. That, one would suppose at first, might exonerate Losely; but he was so clever a fellow at all mechanical contrivances, that, coupled with the place of finding, the nail made greatly against him; and still more so, when some nails precisely similar were found on the chimney-place of an inner-room in his apartment, a room between that in which he had received Gunston and his bed-chamber, and used by him both as study and workshop; the nails, indeed, which were very long and narrow, with a Gothic ornamental head, were at once recognized by the carpenter on the estate as having been made according to Losely's directions, for a garden-bench to be placed in Gunston's favorite walk—Gunston having

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remarked, some days before, that he should like a seat there, and Losely having undertaken to make one from a design by Pugin. Still loth to believe in Losely's guilt, Gunston went to London with the police superintendent, the valet, and the neighboring attorney. They had no difficulty in finding Losely; he was at his son's lodgings in the City, near the commercial house in which the son was a clerk. On being told of the robbery, he seemed at first unaffectedly surprised, evincing no fear. He was asked whether he had gone into the study about two o'clock in the morning? He said, "No; why should I?" The valet exclaimed, "But I saw you — I knew you by that old gray cloak, with the red lining. Why, there it is now — on that chair yonder. I'll swear it is the same." Losely then began to tremble visibly, and grew extremely pale. A question was next put to him as to the nail, but he seemed quite stupefied, muttering, "Good Heavens! the cloak — you mean to say you saw that cloak?" They searched his person — found on him some sovereigns, silver, and one bank-note for five pounds. The number on that bank-note corresponded with a number in Gunston's pocket-book. He was asked to say where he got that five-pound note. He refused to answer. Gunston said, "It is one of the notes stolen from me!" Losely cried, fiercely, "Take care what you say! How do you know?" Gunston replied, "I took an account of the numbers of my notes on leaving your room. Here is the memorandum in my pocket-book — see —" Losely looked, and fell back as if shot. Losely's brother-in-law

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was in the room at the time, and he exclaimed, "Oh, William! you can't be guilty. You are the honestest fellow in the world. There must be some mistake, gentlemen. Where did you get the note, William — say?" Losely made no answer, but seemed lost in thought or stupefaction. "I will go for your son, William — perhaps he may help to explain." Losely then seemed to wake up. "My son! what! would you expose me before my son? he's gone into the country, as you know. What has he to do with it? I took the notes — there — I have confessed. Have done with it," or words to that effect.'

"Nothing more of importance," said the Colonel, turning over the leaves of his MS., "except to account for the crime. And here we come back to the money-lender. You remember the valet said that a gentleman had called on Losely two days before the robbery. This proved to be the identical bill-discounter to whom Losely had paid away his fortune. This person deposed that Losely had written to him some days before, stating that he wanted to borrow two or three hundred pounds, which he could repay by installments out of his salary. What would be the terms? The money-lender having occasion to be in the neighborhood, called to discuss the matter in person, and to ask if Losely could not get some other person to join in security—suggesting his brother-in-law. Losely replied that it was a favor he would never ask any one; that his brother-in-law had no pecuniary means beyond his salary as a senior clerk; and, supposing that he (Losely) lost his place, which he might any day, if Gun-

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ston were displeased with him — how then could he be sure that his debt would not fall on the security? Upon which the money-lender remarked that the precarious nature of his income was the very reason why a security was wanted. And Losely answered, 'Ay; but you know that you incur that risk, and charge accordingly. Between you and me the debt and the hazard are mere matter of business; but between me and my security it would be a matter of honor.' Finally the money-lender agreed to find the sum required, though asking very high terms. Losely said he would consider, and let him know. There the conversation ended. But Gunston inquired 'If Losely had ever had dealings with the money-lender before, and for what purpose it was likely he would want the money now?' and the money-lender answered 'That probably Losely had some sporting or gaming speculations on the sly; for that it was to pay a gambling debt that he had joined Captain Haughton in a bill for £1200.' And Gunston afterward told a friend of mine that this it was that decided him to appear as a witness at the trial; and you will observe that if Gunston had kept away, there would have been no evidence sufficient to insure conviction. But Gunston considered that the man who could gamble away his whole fortune must be incorrigible, and that Losely, having concealed from him that he had become destitute by such transactions, must have been more than a mere security in a joint bill with Captain Haughton. Gunston could never have understood such an inconsistency in human nature, that the

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same man who broke open his bureau should have become responsible to the amount of his fortune for a debt of which he had not shared the discredit; and still less that such a man should, in case he had been so generously imprudent, have concealed his loss out of delicate tenderness for the character of the man to whom he owed his ruin. Therefore, in short, Gunston looked on his dishonest steward, not as a man tempted by a sudden impulse in some moment of distress, at which a previous life was belied, but as a confirmed, dissimulating sharper, to whom public justice allowed no mercy. And thus, Lionel, William Losely was prosecuted, tried, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. By pleading guilty, the term was probably made shorter than it otherwise would have been."

Lionel continued too agitated for words. The Colonel, not seeming to heed his emotions, again ran his eye over the MS.

"I observe here that there are some queries entered as to the evidence against Losely. The solicitor whom, when I heard of his arrest, I engaged and sent down to the place on his behalf—"

"You did! Heaven reward you!" sobbed out Lionel. "But my father?—where was he?"

"Then?—in his grave."

Lionel breathed a deep sigh, as of thankfulness.

"The lawyer, I say—a sharp fellow—was of opinion that if Losely had refused to plead guilty, he could have got him off in spite of his first confession—turned the

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suspicion against some one else. In the passage where the nail was picked up, there was a door into the park. That door was found unbolted in the inside the next morning; a thief might therefore have thus entered, and passed at once into the study. The nail was discovered close by that door; the thief might have dropped it on putting out his light, which, by the valet's account, he must have done, when he was near the door in question, and required the light no more. Another circumstance in Losely's favor. Just outside the door, near a laurel-bush, was found the fag-end of one of those small rose-colored wax-lights which are often placed in lucifer match-boxes. If this had been used by the thief, it would seem as if, extinguishing the light before he stepped into the air, he very naturally jerked away the morsel of taper left, when, in the next moment, he was out of the house. But Losely would not have gone out of the house; nor was he, nor any one about the premises, ever known to make use of that kind of taper, which would rather appertain to the fashionable fopperies of a London dandy. You will have observed, too, the valet had not seen the thief's face. His testimony rested solely on the colors of a cloak, which, on cross-examination, might have gone for nothing. The dog had barked before the light was seen. It was not the light that made him bark. He wished to get out of the court-yard; that looked as if there were some stranger in the grounds beyond. Following up this clew, the lawyer ascertained that a strange man had been seen in the park toward the

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gray of the evening, walking up in the direction of the house. And here comes the strong point. At the railway station, about five miles from Mr. Gunston's, a strange man had arrived just in time to take his place in the night train from the north toward London, stopping there at four o'clock in the morning. The station-master remembered the stranger buying the ticket, but did not remark his appearance. The porter did, however, so far notice him, as he hurried into a first-class carriage, that he said afterward to the station-master, 'Why, that gentleman has a gray cloak just like Mr. Losely's. If he had not been thinner and taller, I should have thought it was Mr. Losely.' Well, Losely went to the same station the next morning, taking an early train, going thither on foot, with his carpet-bag in his hand; and both the porter and station-master declared that he had no cloak on him at the time; and as he got into a second-class carriage, the porter even said to him, ''Tis a sharp morning, Sir; I'm afraid you'll be cold.' Furthermore, as to the purpose for which Losely had wished to borrow of the money-lender, his brother-in-law stated that Losely's son had been extravagant, had contracted debts, and was even hiding from his creditors in a country town, at which William Losely had stopped for a few hours on his way to London. He knew the young man's employer had written kindly to Losely several days before, lamenting the son's extravagance; intimating that unless his debts were discharged, he must lose the situation in which otherwise he might soon rise to competence, for that he

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was quick and sharp; and that it was impossible not to feel indulgent toward him, he was so lively and so good-looking. The trader added that he would forbear to dismiss the young man as long as he could. It was on the receipt of that letter that Losely had entered into communication with the money-lender, whom he had come to town to seek, and to whose house he was actually going at the very hour of Gunston's arrival. But why borrow of the money-lender, if he had just stolen more money than he had any need to borrow?

"The most damning fact against Losely, by the discovery in his possession of the £5 note, of which Mr. Gunston deposed to have taken the number, was certainly hard to get over; still, an ingenious lawyer might have thrown doubt on Gunston's testimony—a man confessedly so careless might have mistaken the number, etc. The lawyer went, with these hints for defense, to see Losely himself in prison; but Losely declined his help — became very angry — said that he would rather suffer death itself than have suspicion transferred to some innocent man; and that, as to the cloak, it had been inside his carpet bag. So you see, bad as he was, there was something inconsistently honorable left in him still. Poor Willy! he would not even subpœna any of his old friends as to his general character. But even if he had, what could the Court do since he pleaded guilty? And now dismiss that subject, it begins to pain me extremely. You were to speak to me about some one of the same name when my story was concluded. What is it?"

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"I am so confused," faltered Lionel, still quivering with emotion, "that I can scarcely answer you — scarcely recollect myself. But — but — while you were describing this poor William Losely, his talent for mimicry and acting, I could not help thinking that I had seen him." Lionel proceeded to speak of Gentleman Waife, "Can that be the man?"

Alban shook his head incredulously. He thought it so like a romantic youth to detect imaginary resemblances.

"No," said he, "my dear boy. My William Losely could never become a strolling player in a village fair. Besides, I have good reason to believe that Willy is well off; probably made money in the colony by some lucky hit: for when do you say you saw your stroller? Five years ago? Well, not very long before that date — perhaps a year or two — less than two years I am sure — this eccentric rascal sent Mr. Gunston, the man who had transported him, £100! Gunston, you must know, feeling more than ever bored and hipped when he lost Willy, tried to divert himself by becoming director in some railway company. The company proved a bubble; all turned their indignation on the one rich man who could pay where others cheated. Gunston was ruined — purse and character — fled to Calais; and there, less than seven years ago, when in great distress, he received from poor Willy a kind, affectionate, forgiving letter, and £100. I have this from Gunston's nearest relation, to whom he told it, crying like a child. Willy gave no address; but it is clear that at the time he must have been too well

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off to turn mountebank at your miserable exhibition. Poor, dear, rascally, infamous, big-hearted Willy," burst out the Colonel. "I wish to Heaven he had only robbed me!"

"Sir," said Lionel, "rely upon it, that man you describe never robbed any one — 'tis impossible."

"No — very possible! — human nature," said Alban Morley. "And, after all, he really owed Gunston that £100. For out of the sum stolen, Gunston received anonymously, even before the trial, all the missing notes, minus about that £100; and Willy, therefore, owed Gunston the money, but not, perhaps, that kind, forgiving letter. Pass on — quick — the subject is worse than the gout. You have heard before the name of Losely — possibly. There are many members of the old Baronet's family; but when or where did you hear it?"

"I will tell you; the man who holds the bill (ah, the word sickens me!) reminded me when he called that I had seen him at my mother's house — a chance acquaintance of hers — professed great regard for me — great admiration for Mr. Darrell — and then surprised me by asking if I had never heard Mr. Darrell speak of Mr. Jasper Losely."

"Jasper!" said the Colonel; "Jasper!—well, go on."

"When I answered 'No,' Mr. Poole (that is his name) shook his head, and muttered — 'A sad affair — very bad business — I could do Mr. Darrell a great service if he would let me;' and then went on talking what seemed to me impertinent gibberish about 'family exposures,' and

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'poverty making men desperate,' and 'better compromise matters;' and finally wound up by begging me, 'If I loved Mr. Darrell, and wished to guard him from very great annoyance and suffering, to persuade him to give Mr. Poole an interview.' Then he talked about his own character in the City, and so forth, and entreating me 'not to think of paying him till quite convenient; that he would keep the bill in his desk; nobody should know of it; too happy to do me a favor'—laid his card on the table, and went away. Tell me, should I say anything to Mr. Darrell about this or not?"

"Certainly not, till I have seen Mr. Poole myself. You have the money to pay him about you? Give it to me with Mr. Poole's address; I will call and settle the matter. Just ring the bell." (To the servant, entering) "Order my horse round." Then, when they were again alone, turning to Lionel abruptly, laying one hand on his shoulder, with the other grasping his hand warmly, cordially, "Young man," said Alban Morley, "I love you—I am interested in you—who would not be? I have gone through this story; put myself positively to pain—which I hate—solely for your good. You see what usury and money-lenders bring men to. Look me in the face! Do you feel now that you would have the 'moral courage' you before doubted of? Have you done with such things forever?"

"Forever, so help me Heaven! The lesson has been cruel, but I do thank and bless you for it."

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"I knew you would. "Mark this! never treat money affairs with levity—MONEY IS CHARACTER! Stop. I have bared a father's fault to a son. It was necessary—or even in his grave those faults might have revived in you. Now, I add this, if Charles Haughton—like you, handsome, high-spirited, favored by men, spoiled by women—if Charles Haughton, on entering life, could have seen, in the mirror I have held up to you, the consequences of pledging the morrow to pay for to-day, Charles Haughton would have been shocked as you are, cured as you will be. Humbled by your own first error, be lenient to all his. Take up his life where I first knew it; when his heart was loyal, his lips truthful. Raze out the interval; imagine that he gave birth to you in order to replace the leaves of existence we thus blot out and tear away. In every error avoided say, 'Thus the father warns the son;' in every honorable action or hard self-sacrifice, say, 'Thus the son pays a father's debt.'"

Lionel, clasping his hands together, raised his eyes streaming with tears, as if uttering inly a vow to Heaven. The Colonel bowed his soldier-crest with religious reverence, and glided from the room noiselessly.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Being but one of the considerate pauses in a long journey—charitably afforded to the Reader.

Colonel Morley found Mr. Poole at home, just returned from his office; he staid with that gentleman nearly an hour, and then went straight to Darrell. As the time appointed to meet the French acquaintance, who depended on his hospitalities for a dinner, was now nearly arrived, Alban's conference with his English friend was necessarily brief and hurried, though long enough to confirm one fact in Mr. Poole's statement, which had been unknown to the Colonel before that day, and the admission of which was to Guy Darrell a pang as sharp as ever wrenched confession from the lips of a prisoner in the cells of the Inquisition. On returning from Greenwich, and depositing his Frenchman in some melancholy theater, time enough for that resentful foreigner to witness theft and murder committed upon an injured countryman's vaudeville, Alban hastened again to Carlton Gardens. He found Darrell alone, pacing his floor to and fro, in the habit he had acquired in earlier life, perhaps when meditating some complicated law-case, or wrestling with himself against some secret sorrow. There are men of quick nerves who

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require a certain action of the body for the better composure of the mind; Darrell was one of them.

During these restless movements, alternated by abrupt pauses, equally inharmonious to the supreme quiet which characterized his listener's tastes and habits, the haughty gentleman disburdened himself of at least one of the secrets which he had hitherto guarded from his early friend. But as that secret connects itself with the history of a Person about whom it is well that the reader should now learn more than was known to Darrell himself, we will assume our privilege to be ourselves the narrator, and at the cost of such dramatic vivacity as may belong to dialogue, but with the gain to the reader of clearer insight into those portions of the past which the occasion permits us to reveal — we will weave into something like method the more imperfect and desultory communications by which Guy Darrell added to Alban Morley's distasteful catalogue of painful subjects. The reader will allow, perhaps, that we thus evince a desire to gratify his curiosity, when we state, that of Arabella Crane, Darrell spoke but in one brief and angry sentence, and that not by the name in which the reader as yet alone knows her; and it is with the antecedents of Arabella Crane that our explanation will tranquilly commence.

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CHAPTER IX.

Grim Arabella Crane.

ONCE on a time there lived a merchant named Fossett, a widower with three children, of whom a daughter, Arabella, was by some years the eldest. He was much respected, deemed a warm man, and a safe — attended diligently to his business — suffered no partner, no foreman, to dictate or intermeddle — liked his comforts, but made no pretence to fashion. His villa was at Clapham, not a showy but a solid edifice, with lodge, lawn, and gardens, chiefly notable for what is technically called *glass* — viz., a range of glass-houses on the most improved principles; the heaviest pines, the earliest strawberries. "I'm no judge of flowers," quoth Mr. Fossett, meekly. "Give me a plain lawn, provided it be close shaven. But I say to my gardener, 'Forcing is my hobby—a cucumber with my fish all the year round!'" Yet do not suppose Mr. Fossett ostentatious — quite the reverse. He would no more ruin himself for the sake of dazzling others than he would for the sake of serving them. He liked a warm house, spacious rooms, good living, old wine, for their inherent merits. He cared not to parade them to public envy. When he dined alone, or with a single favored guest, the best Lafitte, the oldest sherry!—when extend-

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ing the rites of miscellaneous hospitality to neighbors, relations, or other slight acquaintances — for Lafitte, Julien; and for sherry, Cape!—Thus not provoking vanity, nor courting notice, Mr. Fossett was without an enemy, and seemed without a care. Formal were his manners, formal his household, formal even the stout cob that bore him from Cheapside to Clapham, from Clapham to Cheapside. That cob could not even prick up its ears if it wished to shy — its ears were cropped, so were its mane and its tail.

Arabella early gave promise of beauty, and more than ordinary power of intellect and character. Her father bestowed on her every advantage of education. She was sent to a select boarding-school of the highest reputation; the strictest discipline, the best masters, the longest bills. At the age of seventeen she had become the show pupil of the seminary. Friends wondered somewhat why the prim merchant took such pains to lavish on his daughter the worldly accomplishments which seemed to give him no pleasure, and of which he never spoke with pride. But certainly, if she was so clever — first-rate musician, exquisite artist, accomplished linguist, "it was very nice in old Fossett to bear it so meekly, never crying her up, nor showing her off to less fortunate parents — very nice in him — good sense — greatness of mind."

"Arabella," said the worthy man, one day, a little time after she had left school for good; "Arabella," said he, "Mrs. ——," naming the head teacher in that famous school, "pays you a very high compliment in a letter I

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received from her this morning. She says it is a pity you are not a poor man's daughter — that you are so steady and so clever that you could make a fortune for yourself as a teacher."

Arabella at that age could smile gayly, and gayly she smiled at the notion conveyed in the compliment.

"No one can guess," resumed the father, twirling his thumbs and speaking rather through his nose, "the ups and downs in this mortal sphere of trial, 'especially in the mercantile community. If ever, when I'm dead and gone, adversity should come upon you, you will gratefully remember that I have given you the best of education, and take care of your little brother and sister, who are both — stupid!"

These doleful words did not make much impression on Arabella, uttered as they were in a handsome drawing-room, opening on the neat-shaven lawn it took three gardeners to shave, with a glittering side-view of those galleries of glass in which strawberries were ripe at Christmas, and cucumbers never failed to fish. Time went on. Arabella was now twenty-three — a very fine girl, with a decided manner — much occupied by her music, her drawing, her books, and her fancies. Fancies — for, like most girls with very active heads and idle hearts, she had a vague yearning for some excitement beyond the monotonous routine of a young lady's life; and the latent force of her nature inclined her to admire whatever was out of the beaten track — whatever was wild and daring. She had received two or three offers from

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young gentlemen in the same mercantile community as that which surrounded her father in this sphere of trial. But they did not please her; and she believed her father when he said that they only courted her under the idea that he would come down with something handsome; "whereas," said the merchant, "I hope you will marry an honest man, who will like you for yourself, and wait for your fortune till my will is read. As King William says to his son, in the *History of England*, 'I don't mean to strip till I go to bed.'"

One night, at a ball in Clapham, Arabella saw the man who was destined to exercise so baleful an influence over her existence. Jasper Losely had been brought to this ball by a young fellow-clerk in the same commercial house as himself; and then in all the bloom of that conspicuous beauty, to which the miniature Arabella had placed before his eyes so many years afterward did but feeble justice, it may well be conceived that he concentrated on himself the admiring gaze of the assembly. Jasper was younger than Arabella; but, what with the height of his stature and the self-confidence of his air, he looked four or five and twenty. Certainly, in so far as the distance from childhood may be estimated by the loss of innocence, Jasper might have been any age! He was told that old Fossett's daughter would have a very fine fortune; that she was a strong-minded young lady, who governed her father, and would choose for herself; and accordingly he devoted himself to Arabella the whole of the evening. The effect produced on the mind of this ill-

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fated woman by her dazzling admirer was as sudden as it proved to be lasting. There was a strange charm in the very contrast between his rattling audacity and the bashful formalities of the swains who had hitherto wooed her, as if she frightened them. Even his good looks fascinated her less than that vital energy and power about the lawless brute, which to her seemed the elements of heroic character, though but the attributes of riotous spirits, magnificent formation, flattered vanity, and imperious egotism. She was as a bird gazing spell-bound on a gay young boa-constrictor, darting from bough to bough, sunning its brilliant hues, and showing off all its beauty, just before it takes the bird for its breakfast.

When they parted that night their intimacy had made so much progress that arrangements had been made for its continuance. Arabella had an instinctive foreboding that her father would be less charmed than herself with Jasper Losely; that, if Jasper were presented to him, he would possibly forbid her farther acquaintance with a young clerk, however superb his outward appearance. She took the first false step. She had a maiden aunt by the mother's side, who lived in Bloomsbury, gave and went to small parties, to which Jasper could easily get introduced. She arranged to pay a visit for some weeks to this aunt, who was then very civil to her, accepting with marked kindness seasonable presents of strawberries, pines, spring chickens, and so forth, and offering in turn, whenever it was convenient, a spare room, and whatever amusement a round of small parties, and the innocent

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flirtations incidental thereto, could bestow. Arabella said nothing to her father about Jasper Losely, and to her aunt's she went. Arabella saw Jasper very often; they became engaged to each other, exchanged vows and love-tokens, locks of hair, etc. Jasper already much troubled by duns, became naturally ardent to insure his felicity and Arabella's supposed fortune. Arabella at last summoned courage, and spoke to her father. To her delighted surprise, Mr. Fossett, after some moralizing, more on the uncertainty of life in general than her clandestine proceedings in particular, agreed to see Mr. Jasper Losely, and asked him down to dinner. After dinner, over a bottle of Lafitte, in an exceedingly plain but exceedingly weighty silver jug, which made Jasper's mouth water (I mean the jug), Mr. Fossett, commencing with that somewhat coarse though royal saying of William the Conqueror, with which he had before edified his daughter, assured Jasper that he gave his full consent to the young gentleman's nuptials with Arabella, provided Jasper or his relations would maintain her in a plain respectable way, and wait for her fortune till his (Fossett's) will was read. What that fortune would be, Mr. Fossett declined even to hint. Jasper went away very much cooled. Still the engagement went on. The nuptials were tacitly deferred. Jasper and his relations maintain a wife! Preposterous idea! It would take a Clan of relations and a Zenana of wives to maintain in that state to which he deemed himself entitled — Jasper himself! But just as he was meditating the possibility of a compromise with

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old Fossett, by which he would agree to wait till the will was read for contingent advantages, provided Fossett, in his turn, would agree in the mean while to afford lodging and board, with a trifle for pocket-money, to Arabella and himself, in the Clapham Villa, which, though not partial to rural scenery, Jasper preferred, on the whole, to a second floor in the city — old Fossett fell ill, took to his bed; was unable to attend to his business, some one else attended to it; and the consequence was, that the house stopped payment, and was discovered to have been insolvent for the last ten years. Not a discreditable bankruptcy. There might, perhaps, be seven shillings in the pound ultimately paid, and not more than forty families irretrievably ruined. Old Fossett, safe in his bed, bore the affliction with philosophical composure; observed to Arabella that he had always warned her of the ups and downs in this sphere of trial; referred again with pride to her first-rate education; commended again to her care Tom and Biddy; and, declaring that he died in charity with all men, resigned himself to the last slumber.

Arabella at first sought a refuge with her maiden aunt. But that lady, though not hit in pocket by her brother-in-law's failure, was more vehement against his memory than his most injured creditor — not only that she deemed herself unjustly defrauded of the pines, strawberries, and spring chickens, by which she had been enabled to give small parties at small cost, though with ample show, but that she was robbed of the consequence she had hitherto derived from the supposed expectations of her niece. In

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short, her welcome was so hostile, and her condolences so cutting, that Arabella quitted her door with a solemn determination never again to enter it.

And now the nobler qualities of the bankrupt's daughter rose at once into play. Left penniless, she resolved by her own exertions to support and to rear her young brother and sister. The great school to which she had been the ornament willingly received her as a teacher, until some more advantageous place in a private family, and with a salary worthy of her talents and accomplishments, could be found. Her intercourse with Jasper became necessarily suspended. She had the generosity to write, offering to release him from his engagement. Jasper considered himself fully released without that letter; but he deemed it neither gallant nor discreet to say so. Arabella might obtain a situation with larger salary than she could possibly need, the superfluities whereof Jasper might undertake to invest. Her aunt had evidently something to leave, though she might have nothing to give. In fine, Arabella, if not rich enough for a wife, might be often rich enough for a friend at need; and so long as he was engaged to her for life, it must be not more her pleasure than her duty to assist him to live. Besides, independently of these prudential though not ardent motives for declaring unalterable fidelity to troth, Jasper at that time really did entertain what he called love for the handsome young woman — flattered that one of attainments so superior to all the girls he had ever known should be so proud even less of his affection

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for her than her own affection for himself. Thus the engagement lasted — interviews none — letters frequent. Arabella worked hard, looking to the future; Jasper worked as little as possible, and was very much bored by the present.

Unhappily, as it turned out, so great a sympathy, not only among the teachers, but among her old school-fellows, was felt for Arabella's reverse — her character for steadiness as well as talent stood so high, and there was something so creditable in her resolution to maintain her orphan brother and sister — that an effort was made to procure her a livelihood much more lucrative, and more independent, than she could obtain either in a school or a family. Why not take a small house of her own, live there with her fellow-orphans, and give lessons out by the hour? Several families at once agreed so to engage her, and an income adequate to all her wants was assured. Arabella adopted this plan. She took the house; Bridget Greggs, the nurse of her infancy, became her servant, and soon to that house, stealthily in the shades of evening, glided Jasper Losely. She could not struggle against his influence — had not the heart to refuse his visits — he was so poor — in such scrapes — and professed himself to be so unhappy. There now became some one else to toil for, besides the little brother and sister. But what were Arabella's gains to a man who already gambled! New afflictions smote her. A contagious fever broke out in the neighborhood; her little brother caught it; her little sister sickened the next day; in less than a week two

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small coffins were borne from her door by the Black Horses — borne to that plot of sunny turf in the pretty suburban cemetery, bought with the last earnings made for the little ones by the mother-like sister — Motherless, lone survivor! what! no friend on earth, no soother but that direful Jasper! Alas! the truly dangerous Venus is not that Erycina round whom circle Jest and Laughter. Sorrow, and that sense of solitude which makes us welcome a footstep as a child left in the haunting dark welcomes the entrance of light — weaken the outworks of female virtue more than all the vain levities of mirth, or the flatteries which follow the path of Beauty through the crowd. Alas, and alas! Let the tale hurry on!

Jasper Losely had still more solemnly sworn to marry his adored Arabella. But when? When they are rich enough. She feels as if her spirit was gone — as if she could work no more. She was no weak, commonplace girl, whom love can console for shame. She had been rigidly brought up; her sense of female rectitude was keen; her remorse was noiseless, but it was stern. Harassments of a more vulgar nature beset her; she had forestalled her sources of income; she had contracted debts for Jasper's sake: in vain, her purse was emptied, yet his no fuller. His creditors pressed him; he told her that he must hide. One winter's day he thus departed; she saw him no more for a year. She heard, a few days after he left her, of his father's crime and committal. Jasper was sent abroad by his maternal uncle, at his father's prayer; sent to a commercial house in France,

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in which the uncle obtained him a situation. In fact, the young man had been dispatched to France under another name, in order to save him from the obloquy which his father had brought upon his own.

Soon came William Losely's trial and sentence. Arabella felt the disgrace acutely — felt how it would affect the audacious, insolent Jasper; did not wonder that he forebore to write to her. She conceived him bowed by shame, but she was buoyed up by her conviction that they should meet again. For good or for ill, she held herself bound to him for life. But meanwhile the debts she had incurred on his account came upon her. She was forced to dispose of her house; and at that time Mrs. Lyndsay, looking out for some first-rate superior governess for Matilda Darrell, was urged by all means to try and secure for that post Arabella Fossett. The highest testimonials from the school at which she had been reared, from the most eminent professional masters, from the families at which she had recently taught, being all brought to bear upon Mr. Darrell, he authorized Mrs. Lyndsay to propose such a salary as could not fail to secure a teacher of such rare qualifications. And thus Arabella became governess to Miss Darrell.

There is a kind of young lady of whom her nearest relations will say, "I can't make that girl out." Matilda Darrell was that kind of young lady. She talked very little; she moved very noiselessly; she seemed to regard herself as a secret which she had solemnly sworn not to let out. She had been steeped in slyness from her early

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infancy by a sly mother. Mrs. Darrell was a woman who had always something to conceal. There was always some note to be thrust out of sight; some visit not to be spoken of; something or other which Matilda was not on any account to mention to Papa.

When Mrs. Darrell died, Matilda was still a child, but she still continued to view her father as a person against whom prudence demanded her to be constantly on her guard. It was not that she was exactly afraid of him — he was very gentle to her, as he was to all children; but his loyal nature was antipathetic to hers. She had no sympathy with him. How confide her thoughts to him? She had an instinctive knowledge that those thoughts were not such as could harmonize with his. Yet, though taciturn, uncaressing, undemonstrative, she appeared mild and docile. Her reserve was ascribed to constitutional timidity. Timid to a degree she usually seemed; yet, when you thought you had solved the enigma, she said or did something so coolly determined, that you were forced again to exclaim, "I can't make that girl out!" She was not quick at her lessons. You had settled in your mind that she was dull, when, by a chance remark, you were startled to find that she was very sharp; keenly observant, when you had fancied her fast asleep. She had seemed, since her mother's death, more fond of Mrs. Lyndsay and Caroline than of any other human beings — always appeared sullen or out of spirits when they were absent; yet she confided to them no more than she did to her father. You would suppose from this description

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that Matilda could inspire no liking in those with whom she lived. Not so; her very secretiveness had a sort of attraction—a puzzle always creates some interest. Then her face, though neither handsome nor pretty, had in it a treacherous softness — a subdued, depressed expression. A kind observer could not but say with an indulgent pity, "There must be a great deal of heart in that girl, if one could but — make her out."

She appeared to take at once to Arabella, more than she had taken to Mrs. Lyndsay, or even to Caroline, with whom she had been brought up as a sister, but who, then joyous and quick and innocently fearless — with her soul in her eyes and her heart on her lips — had no charm for Matilda, because there she saw no secret to penetrate, and her she had no object in deceiving.

But this stranger, of accomplishments so rare, of character so decided, with a settled gloom on her lip, a gathered care on her brow — *there* was some one to study, and some one with whom she felt a sympathy; for she detected at once that Arabella was also a secret.

At first, Arabella, absorbed in her own reflections, gave to Matilda but the mechanical attention which a professional teacher bestows on an ordinary pupil. But an interest in Matilda sprung up in her breast, in proportion as she conceived a venerating gratitude for Darrell. He was aware of the pomp and circumstance which had surrounded her earlier years; he respected the creditable energy with which she had devoted her talents to the support of the young children thrown upon her

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care; compassionated her bereavement of those little fellow-orphans for whom toil had been rendered sweet; and he strove, by a kindness of forethought and a delicacy of attention, which were the more prized in a man so eminent and so preoccupied, to make her forget that she was a salaried teacher — to place her saliently, and as a matter of course, in the position of gentlewoman, guest, and friend. Recognizing in her a certain vigor and force of intellect apart from her mere accomplishments, he would flatter her scholastic pride, by referring to her memory in some question of reading, or consulting her judgment on some point of critical taste. She, in return, was touched by his chivalrous kindness to the depth of a nature that, though already seriously injured by its unhappy contact with a soul like Jasper's, retained that capacity of gratitude, the loss of which is humanity's last depravation. Nor this alone: Arabella was startled by the intellect and character of Darrell into that kind of homage which a woman, who has hitherto met but her own intellectual inferiors, renders to the first distinguished personage in whom she recognizes, half with humility and half with awe, an understanding and a culture to which her own reason is but the flimsy glass-house, and her own knowledge but the forced exotic.

Arabella, thus roused from her first listlessness, sought to requite Darrell's kindness by exerting every energy to render his insipid daughter an accomplished woman. So far as mere ornamental education extends, the teacher was more successful than, with all her experience, her

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skill, and her zeal, she had presumed to anticipate. Matilda, without ear or taste, or love for music, became a very fair mechanical musician. Without one artistic predisposition, she achieved the science of perspective — she attained even to the mixture of colors — she filled a portfolio with drawings which no young lady need have been ashamed to see circling round a drawing-room. She carried Matilda's thin mind to the farthest bound it could have reached without snapping, through an elegant range of selected histories and harmless feminine classics — through Gallic dialogues — through Tuscan themes — through Teuton verbs — yea, across the invaded bounds of astonished Science into the Elementary Ologies. And all this being done, Matilda Darrell was exactly the same creature that she was before. In all that related to character, to inclinations, to heart, even that consummate teacher could give no intelligible answer, when Mrs. Lyndsay, in her softest accents (and no accents ever were softer), sighed—"Poor, dear Matilda! can *you* make her out, Miss Fossett?" Miss Fossett could not make her out. But, after the most attentive study, Miss Fossett had inly decided that there was nothing to make out — that, like many other very nice girls, Matilda Darrell was a harmless nullity, what you call "a miss." White deal or willow, to which Miss Fossett had done all in the way of increasing its value as ornamental furniture, when she had veneered it over with rose-wood or satin-wood, enriched its edges with ormolu, and strewed its surface with nicknacks and albums. But Arabella firmly believed

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Matilda Darrell to be a quiet, honest, good sort of "miss," on the whole—very fond of her, Arabella. The teacher had been several months in Darrell's family, when Caroline Lyndsay, who had been almost domesticated with Matilda (sharing the lessons bestowed on the latter, whether by Miss Fossett or visiting masters), was taken away by Mrs. Lyndsay on a visit to the old Marchioness of Montfort. Matilda, who was to come out the next year, was thus almost exclusively with Arabella, who redoubled all her pains to veneer the white deal, and protect with ormolu its feeble edges — so that, when it "came out," all should admire that thoroughly fashionable piece of furniture. It was the habit of Miss Fossett and her pupil to take a morning walk in the quiet retreats of the Green Park; and one morning as they were thus strolling, nursery-maids and children, and elderly folks, who were ordered to take early exercise, undulating round their unsuspecting way — suddenly, right upon their path (unlooked-for as the wolf that startled Horace in the Sabine wood, but infinitely more deadly than that runaway animal), came Jasper Losely! Arabella uttered a faint scream. She could not resist—had no thought of resisting—the impulse to bound forward—lay her hand on his arm. She was too agitated to perceive whether his predominant feeling was surprise or rapture. A few hurried words were exchanged, while Matilda Darrell gave one sidelong glance toward the handsome stranger, and walked quietly by them. On his part, Jasper said that he had just returned to London — that he had abandoned forever all

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idea of a commercial life — that his father's misfortune (he gave that gentle appellation to the incident of penal transportation) had severed him from all former friends, ties, habits — that he had dropped the name of Losely forever — entreated Arabella not to betray it — his name now was Hammond — his "prospects," he said, "fairer than they had ever been." Under the name of Hammond, as an independent gentleman, he had made friends more powerful than he could ever have made under the name of Losely as a city clerk. He blushed to think he had ever been a city clerk. No doubt he should get into some Government office; and then, oh then, with assured income, and the certainty to rise, he might claim the longed-for hand of the "best of creatures."

On Arabella's part, she hastily explained her present position. She was governess to Miss Darrell — that was Miss Darrell. Arabella must not leave her walking on by herself—she would write to him. Addresses were exchanged — Jasper gave a very neat card — "Mr. Hammond, No. ——, Duke Street, St. James's."

Arabella, with a beating heart, hastened to join her friend. At the rapid glance she had taken of her perfidious lover, she thought him, if possible, improved. His dress, always studied, was more to the fashion of polished society, more simply correct—his air more decided. Altogether he looked prosperous, and his manner had never been more seductive, in its mixture of easy self-confidence and hypocritical coaxing. In fact, Jasper had not been long in the French commercial house — to which he had

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been sent out of the way while his father's trial was proceeding and the shame of it fresh—before certain licenses of conduct had resulted in his dismissal. But, meanwhile, he had made many friends among young men of his own age — those loose wild *viveurs* who, without doing any thing the law can punish as dishonest, contrive for a few fast years to live very showily on their wits. In that strange social fermentation which still prevails in a country where an aristocracy of birth, exceedingly impoverished, and exceedingly numerous so far as the right to prefix a *De* to the name, or to stamp a coronet on the card, can constitute an aristocrat — is diffused among an ambitious, adventurous, restless, and not inelegant young democracy—each cemented with the other by that fiction of law called *égalité;* in that yet unsettled and struggling society in which so much of the old has been irretrievably destroyed, and so little of the new has been solidly constructed—there are much greater varieties, infinitely more subtle grades and distinctions, in the region of life which lies between respectability and disgrace, than can be found in a country like ours. The French novels and dramas may apply less a mirror than a magnifying-glass to the beings that move through that region. But still those French novels and dramas do not unfaithfully represent the classifications of which they exaggerate the types. Those strange combinations, into one tableau, of students and grisettes, opera-dancers, authors, viscounts, swindlers, romantic Lorettes, gamblers on the Bourse, whose pedigree dates from the Crusades; impostors, taking titles from villages

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in which their grandsires might have been saddlers; and if detected, the detection but a matter of laugh; delicate women living like lawless men; men making trade out of love, like dissolute women, yet with point of honor so nice, that, doubt their truth or their courage, and — piff! you are in Charon's boat, humanity in every civilized land may present single specimens, more or less, answering to each thus described. But where, save in France, find them all, if not precisely in the same *salons*, yet so crossing each other to and fro, as to constitute a social phase, and give color to a literature of unquestionable genius? And where, over orgies so miscellaneously Berycinthian, an atmosphere so elegantly Horatian? And where can coarseness so vanish into polished expression as in that diamond-like language—all terseness and sparkle—which, as friendly to Wit in its airiest prose, as hostile to Passion in its torrent or cloud wrack of poetry, seems invented by the Grace out of spite to the Muse?

Into circles such as those of which the dim outline is here so imperfectly sketched, Jasper Losely niched himself, as *le bel Anglais*. (Pleasant representative of the English nation!) Not that those circles are to have the sole credit of his corruption. No! Justice is justice! Stand we up for our native land! *Le bel Anglais* entered those circles a much greater knave than most of those whom he found there. But there, at least, he learned to set a yet higher value on his youth, and strength, and comeliness—on his readiness of resource—on the reckless

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audacity that brow-beat timid and some even valiant men — on the six feet one of faultless symmetry that captivated foolish, and some even sensible women. Gaming was, however, his vice by predilection. A month before Arabella met him he had had a rare run of luck. On the strength of it he had resolved to return to London, and (wholly oblivious of "the best of creatures" till she had thus startled him) hunt out and swoop off with an heiress. Three French friends accompanied him. Each had the same object. Each believed that London swarmed with heiresses. They were all three fine-looking men. One was a Count — at least he said so. But proud of his rank? not a bit of it: all for liberty (no man more likely to lose it) — all for fraternity (no man you would less love as a brother). And as for *égalité!* the son of a shoemaker who was *homme de lettres*, and wrote in a journal, inserted a jest on the Count's countship. "All men are equal before the pistol," said the Count; and knowing that, in that respect, he was equal to most, having practiced at *poupées* from the age of fourteen, he called out the son of Crispin and shot him through the lungs. Another of Jasper's travelling friends was an *enfant du peuple* — boasted that he was a foundling. He made verses of lugubrious strain, and taught Jasper how to shuffle at whist. The third, like Jasper, had been designed for trade; and, like Jasper, he had a soul above it. In politics he was a Communist — in talk a Philanthropist. He was the cleverest man of them all, and is

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now at the galleys. The fate of his two compatriots — more obscure — it is not my duty to discover. In that peculiar walk of life Jasper is as much as I can possibly manage.

It need not be said that Jasper carefully abstained from reminding his old city friends of his existence. It was his object and his hope to drop all identity with that son of a convict who had been sent out of the way to escape humiliation. In this resolve he was the more confirmed because he had no old city friends out of whom any thing could be well got. His poor uncle, who alone of his relations in England had been privy to his change of name, was dead; his end hastened by grief for William Losely's disgrace, and the bad reports he had received from France of the conduct of William Losely's son. That uncle had left, in circumstances too straitened to admit the waste of a shilling, a widow of very rigid opinions; who, if ever by some miraculous turn in the wheel of fortune she could have become rich enough to slay a fatted calf, would never have given the shinbone of it to a prodigal like Jasper, even had he been her own penitent son, instead of a graceless step-nephew. Therefore, as all civilization proceeds westward, Jasper turned his face from the east; and had no more idea of recrossing Temple Bar in search of fortune, friends, or kindred, than a modern Welshman would dream of a pilgrimage to Asian shores to re-embrace those distant relatives whom Hu Gadarn left behind him countless centuries ago, when that mythical chief conducted his faithful

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Cymrians over the Hazy Sea to this happy Island of Honey.*

Two days after his *rencontre* with Arabella in the Green Park, the *soi-disant* Hammond, having, in the interim, learned that Darrell was immensely rich, and Matilda his only surviving child, did not fail to find himself in the Green Park again — and again — and again!

Arabella, of course, felt how wrong it was to allow him to accost her, and walk by one side of her while Miss Darrell was on the other. But she felt, also, as if it would be much more wrong to slip out and meet him alone. Not for worlds would she again have placed herself in such peril. To refuse to meet him at all? — she had not strength enough for *that!* Her joy at seeing him was so immense. And nothing could be more respectful than Jasper's manner and conversation. Whatever of warmer and more impassioned sentiment was exchanged between them passed in notes. Jasper had suggested to Arabella to pass him off to Matilda as some near relation. But Arabella refused all such disguise. Her sole claim to self-respect was in considering him solemnly engaged to her — the man she was to marry. And, after the second time they thus met, she said to Matilda, who had not questioned her by a word — by a look — "I was to be married to that gentleman before my father died; we are to be married as soon as we have something to live upon."

* *Mel Ynnys* — Isle of Honey. One of the poetic names given to England in the language of the ancient Britons.

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Matilda made some commonplace but kindly rejoinder. And thus she became raised into Arabella's confidence—so far as that confidence could be given, without betraying Jasper's real name, or one darker memory in herself. Luxury, indeed, it was to Arabella to find, at last, some one to whom she could speak of that betrothal in which her whole future was invested — of that affection which was her heart's sheet-anchor — of that home, humble it might be, and far off, but to which Time rarely fails to bring the Two, if never weary of the trust, to become as One. Talking thus, Arabella forgot the relationship of pupil and teacher; it was as woman to woman — girl to girl — friend to friend. Matilda seemed touched by the confidence — flattered to possess at last another's secret. Arabella was a little chafed that she did not seem to admire Jasper as much as Arabella thought the whole world must admire. Matilda excused herself. "She had scarcely noticed Mr. Hammond. Yes; she had no doubt he would be considered handsome; but she owned, though it might be bad taste, that she preferred a pale complexion, with auburn hair;" and then she sighed and looked away, as if she had, in the course of her secret life, encountered some fatal pale complexion, with never-to-be-forgotten auburn hair. Not a word was said by either Matilda or Arabella as to concealing from Mr. Darrell these meetings with Mr. Hammond. Perhaps Arabella could not stoop to ask that secrecy; but there was no necessity to ask. Matilda was always too rejoiced to have something to conceal.

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Now, in these interviews, Jasper scarcely ever addressed himself to Matilda; not twenty spoken words could have passed between them; yet, in the very third interview, Matilda's sly fingers had closed on a sly note. And from that day, in each interview, Arabella walking in the center, Jasper on one side, Matilda the other — behind Arabella's back — passed the sly fingers and the sly notes, which Matilda received and answered. Not more than twelve or fourteen times was even this interchange effected. Darrell was about to move to Fawley. All such meetings would be now suspended. Two or three mornings before that fixed for leaving London Matilda's room was found vacant. She was gone. Arabella was the first to discover her flight, the first to learn its cause. Matilda had left on her writing-table a letter for Miss Fossett. It was very short, very quietly expressed, and it rested her justification on a note from Jasper, which she inclosed — a note in which that gallant hero, ridiculing the idea that he could ever have been in love with Arabella, declared that he would destroy himself if Matilda refused to fly. *She* need not fear such angelic confidence in him. No! Even

> "Had he a heart for falsehood framed,
> He ne'er could injure her."

Stifling each noisier cry — but panting — gasping — literally half out of her mind, Arabella rushed into Darrell's study. He, unsuspecting man, calmly bending over his dull books, was startled by her apparition. Few minutes sufficed to tell him all that it concerned him to

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learn. Few brief questions, few passionate answers, brought him to the very worst.

Who, and what, was this Mr. Hammond? Heaven of heavens! the son of William Losely — of a transported felon!

Arabella exulted in a reply which gave her a moment's triumph over the rival who had filched from her such a prize. Roused from his first misery and sense of abasement in this discovery, Darrell's wrath was naturally poured, not on the fugitive child, but on the frontless woman, who, buoyed up by her own rage and sense of wrong, faced him, and did not cower. She, the faithless governess, had presented to her pupil this convict's son in another name; she owned it — she had trepanned into the snares of so vile a fortune-hunter, an ignorant child —she might feign amaze — act remorse — she must have been the man's accomplice. Stung, amidst all the bewilderment of her anguish, by this charge, which, at least, she did not deserve, Arabella tore from her bosom Jasper's recent letters to herself — letters all devotion and passion—placed them before Darrell, and bade him read. Nothing thought she then of name and fame. Nothing but of her wrongs and of her woes. Compared to herself, Matilda seemed the perfidious criminal — she the injured victim. Darrell but glanced over the letters; they were signed "your loving husband."

"What is this?" he exclaimed, "are you married to the man?"

"Yes," cried Arabella, "in the eyes of Heaven!"

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To Darrell's penetration there was no mistaking the significance of those words, and that look; and his wrath redoubled. Anger in him, when once roused, was terrible; he had small need of words to vent it. His eye withered, his gesture appalled. Conscious but of one burning firebrand in brain and heart—of a sense that youth, joy, and hope were for ever gone, that the world could never be the same again — Arabella left the house, her character lost, her talents useless, her very means of existence stopped. Who henceforth would take *her* to teach? Who henceforth place their children under *her* charge?

She shrank into a gloomy lodging — she shut herself up alone with her despair. Strange though it may seem, her anger against Jasper was slight as compared with the intensity of her hate to Matilda. And stranger still it may seem, that as her thoughts recovered from their first chaos, she felt more embittered against the world, more crushed by a sense of shame, and yet galled by a no less keen sense of injustice, in recalling the scorn with which Darrell had rejected all excuse for her conduct in the misery it had occasioned her, than she did by the consciousness of her own lamentable errors. As in Darrell's esteem there was something that, to those who could appreciate it, seemed invaluable, so in his contempt to those who had cherished that esteem there was a weight of ignominy, as if a judge had pronounced a sentence that outlaws the rest of life.

Arabella had not much left out of her munificent salary. What she had hitherto laid by had passed to Jasper —

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defraying, perhaps, the very cost of his flight with her treacherous rival. When her money was gone, she pawned the poor relics of her innocent happy girlhood, which she had been permitted to take from her father's home, and had borne with her wherever she went, like household gods — the prize-books, the lute, the costly work-box, the very bird-cage, all which the reader will remember to have seen in her later life, the books never opened, the lute broken, the bird long, long, long vanished from the cage! Never did she think she should redeem those pledges from that Golgotha, which takes, rarely to give back, so many hallowed tokens of the dream-land called "better days" — the trinkets worn at the first ball, the ring that was given with the earliest love-vow — yea, even the very bells and coral that pleased the infant in its dainty cradle, and the very Bible in which the lips that now bargain for sixpence more, read to some grey-haired father on his bed of death!

Soon the sums thus miserably raised were as miserably doled away. With a sullen apathy the woman contemplated famine. She would make no effort to live — appeal to no relations, no friends. It was a kind of vengeance she took on others, to let herself drift on to death. She had retreated from lodging to lodging, each obscurer, more desolate than the other. Now, she could no longer pay rent for the humblest room; now, she was told to go forth — whither? She knew not — cared not — took her way toward the river, as by that instinct which, when the mind is diseased, tends toward self-destruction, scarce less

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involuntarily than it turns, in health, toward self-preservation. Just as she passed under the lamp-light at the foot of Westminster Bridge, a well-dressed man looked at her, and seized her arm. She raised her head with a chilly, melancholy scorn, as if she had received an insult — as if she feared that the man knew the stain upon her name, and dreamed, in his folly, that the dread of death might cause her to sin again.

"Do you not know me?" said the man; "more strange that I should recognize you! Dear, dear! — and what a dress! — how you *are* altered! Poor thing!"

At the words "Poor thing!" Arabella burst into tears; and in those tears the heavy cloud on her brain seemed to melt away.

"I have been inquiring, seeking for you every where, Miss," resumed the man. "Surely you know me now! Your poor aunt's lawyer! She is no more — died last week. She has left you all she had in the world; and a very pretty income it is, too, for a single lady."

Thus it was that we find Arabella installed in the dreary comforts of Podden Place. "She exchanged," she said, "in honor to her aunt's memory, her own name for that of Crane, which her aunt had borne — her own mother's maiden name." She assumed, though still so young, that title of "Mrs." which spinsters, grown venerable, moodily adopt when they desire all mankind to know that henceforth they relinquish the vanities of tender misses—that, become mistress of themselves, they defy and spit upon our worthless sex, which, whatever its

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repentance, is warned that it repents in vain. Most of her aunt's property was in houses, in various districts of Bloomsbury. Arabella moved from one to the other of these tenements, till she settled for good into the dullest of all. To make it duller yet, by contrast with the past, the Golgotha for once gave up its buried treasures — broken lute, birdless cage!

Somewhere about two years after Matilda's death, Arabella happened to be in the office of the agent who collected her house-rents, when a well-dressed man entered, and, leaning over the counter, said—"There is an advertisement in to-day's *Times* about a lady who offers a home, education, and so forth, to any little motherless girl; terms moderate, as said lady loves children for their own sake. Advertiser refers to your office for particulars — give them!"

The agent turned to his books; and Arabella turned toward the inquirer. "For whose child do you want a home, Jasper Losely?"

Jasper started. "Arabella! Best of creatures! And can you deign to speak to such a vil——"

"Hush — let us walk. Never mind the advertisement of a stranger. I may find a home for a motherless child — a home that will cost you nothing."

She drew him into the street. "But can this be the child of — of — Matilda Darrell?"

"Bella!" replied, in coaxing accents, that most execrable of lady-killers, "can I trust you?—can you be my friend in spite of my having been such a very sad dog?

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But money — what can one do without money in this world? 'Had I a heart for falsehood framed, it would ne'er have injured you' — if I had not been so cursedly hard up! And indeed now, if you would but condescend to forgive and forget, perhaps some day or other we may be Darby and Joan — only, you see, just at this moment I am really not worthy of such a Joan. You know, of course, that I am a widower — not inconsolable."

"Yes; I read of Mrs. Hammond's death in an old newspaper."

"And you did not read of her baby's death, too—some weeks afterward?"

"No; it is seldom that I see a newspaper. Is the infant dead?"

"Hum — you shall hear." And Jasper entered into a recital, to which Arabella listened with attentive interest. At the close she offered to take herself the child for whom Jasper sought a home. She informed him of her change of name and address. The wretch promised to call that evening with the infant; but he sent the infant, and did not call. Nor did he present himself again to her eyes, until, several years afterward, those eyes so luridly welcomed him to Podden Place. But though he did not even condescend to write to her in the mean while, it is probable that Arabella contrived to learn more of his habits and mode of life at Paris than she intimated when they once more met face to face.

And now the reader knows more than Alban Morley, or Guy Darrell perhaps ever will know, of the grim woman in iron gray.

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CHAPTER X.

"Sweet are the uses of Adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Bears yet a precious jewel in its head."

Most persons will agree that the toad is ugly and venomous, but few indeed are the persons who can boast of having actually discovered that "precious jewel in its head" which the poet assures us is placed there. But calamity may be classed in two great divisions — 1st, The affections, which no prudence can avert; 2d, The misfortunes, which men take all possible pains to bring upon themselves. Afflictions of the first class may but call forth our virtues, and result in our ultimate good. Such is the adversity which may give us the jewel. But to get at the jewel we must kill the toad. Misfortunes of the second class but too often increase the errors or the vices by which they were created. Such is the adversity which is all toad and no jewel. If you choose to breed and fatten your own toads, the increase of the venom absorbs every bit of the jewel.

NEVER did I know a man who was an habitual gambler, otherwise than notably inaccurate in his calculations of probabilities in the ordinary affairs of life. Is it that such a man has become so chronic a drunkard of hope, that he sees double every chance in his favor?

Jasper Losely had counted upon two things as matters of course.

1st. Darrell's speedy reconciliation with his only child.

2d. That Darrell's only child must of necessity be Darrell's heiress.

In both these expectations the gambler was deceived.

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Darrell did not even answer the letters that Matilda addressed to him from France, to the shores of which Jasper had borne her, and where he had hastened to make her his wife under his assumed name of Hammond, but his true Christian name of Jasper.

In the disreputable marriage Matilda had made, all the worst parts of her character seemed suddenly revealed to her father's eye, and he saw what he had hitherto sought not to see, the true child of a worthless mother. A mere *mésalliance*, if palliated by long or familiar acquaintance with the object, however it might have galled him, his heart might have pardoned; but here, without even a struggle of duty, without the ordinary coyness of maiden pride, to be won with so scanty a wooing, by a man who she knew was betrothed to another — the dissimulation, the perfidy, the combined effrontery and meanness of the whole transaction, left no force in Darrell's eyes to the commonplace excuses of inexperience and youth. Darrell would not have been Darrell if he could have taken back to his home or his heart a daughter so old in deceit, so experienced in thoughts that dishonor.

Darrell's silence, however, little saddened the heartless bride, and little dismayed the sanguine bridegroom. Both thought that pardon and plenty were but the affair of time — a little more or little less. But their funds rapidly diminished; it became necessary to recruit them. One can't live in hotels entirely upon hope. Leaving his bride for a while in a pleasant provincial town, not many hours distant from Paris, Jasper returned to London,

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intent upon seeing Darrell himself; and should the father-in-law still defer articles of peace, Jasper believed that he could have no trouble in raising a present supply upon such an El Dorado of future expectations. Darrell at once consented to see Jasper, not at his own house, but at his solicitor's. Smothering all opposing disgust, the proud gentleman deemed this condescension essential to the clear and definite understanding of those resolves upon which depended the worldly station and prospects of the wedded pair.

When Jasper was shown into Mr. Gotobed's office, Darrell was alone, standing near the hearth, and by a single quiet gesture repelled that tender rush toward his breast, which Jasper had elaborately prepared; and thus for the first time the two men saw each other, Darrell perhaps yet more resentfully mortified while recognizing those personal advantages in the showy profligate which had rendered a daughter of his house so facile a conquest: Jasper (who had chosen to believe that a father-in-law so eminent must necessarily be old and broken) shocked into the most disagreeable surprise by the sight of a man still young, under forty, with a countenance, a port, a presence, that in any assemblage would have attracted the general gaze from his own brilliant self, and looking altogether as unfavorable an object, whether for pathos or for post-obits, as unlikely to breathe out a blessing or to give up the ghost, as the worst brute of a father-in-law could possibly be. Nor were Darrell's words more comforting than his aspect.

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"Sir, I have consented to see you, partly that you may learn from my own lips once for all that I admit no man's right to enter my family without my consent, and that consent you will never receive, and partly that, thus knowing each other by sight, each may know the man it becomes him most to avoid. The lady who is now your wife is entitled by my marriage-settlement to the reversion of a small fortune at my death; nothing more from me is she likely to inherit. As I have no desire that she to whom I once gave the name of daughter should be dependent wholly on yourself for bread, my solicitor will inform you on what conditions I am willing, during my life, to pay the interest of the sum which will pass to your wife at my death. Sir, I return to your hands the letters that lady has addressed to me, and which, it is easy to perceive, were written at your dictation. No letter from her will I answer. Across my threshold her foot will never pass. Thus, Sir, concludes all possible intercourse between you and myself; what rests is between you and that gentleman."

Darrell had opened a side-door in speaking the last words—pointed toward the respectable form of Mr. Gotobed standing tall beside his tall desk — and, before Jasper could put in a word, the father-in-law was gone.

With becoming brevity Mr. Gotobed made Jasper fully aware that not only all Mr. Darrell's funded or personal property was entirely at his own disposal — that not only the large landed estates he had purchased (and which Jasper had vaguely deemed inherited and in strict entail)

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were in the same condition — condition enviable to the proprietor, odious to the bridegroom of the proprietor's sole daughter; but that even the fee-simple of the poor Fawley Manor-House and lands were vested in Darrell, encumbered only by the portion of £10,000 which the late Mrs. Darrell had brought to her husband, and which was settled, at the death of herself and Darrell, on the children of the marriage.

In the absence of marriage-settlements between Jasper and Matilda, that sum at Darrell's death was liable to be claimed by Jasper, in right of his wife, so as to leave no certainty that provision would remain for the support of his wife and family; and the contingent reversion might, in the mean time, be so dealt with as to bring eventual poverty on them all.

"Sir," said the lawyer, "I will be quite frank with you. It is my wish, acting for Mr. Darrell, so to settle this sum of £10,000 on your wife, and any children she may bear you, as to place it out of your power to anticipate or dispose of, even with Mrs. Hammond's consent. If you part with that power, not at present a valuable one, you are entitled to compensation. I am prepared to make that compensation liberal. Perhaps you would prefer communicating with me through your own solicitor. But I should tell you, that the terms are more likely to be advantageous to you, in proportion as negotiation is confined to us two. It might, for instance, be expedient to tell your solicitor that your true name (I beg you a thousand pardons) is not Hammond. That is a secret which, the

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more you can keep it to yourself, the better I think it will be for you. We have no wish to blab it out."

Jasper by this time had somewhat recovered the first shock of displeasure and disappointment; and with that quickness which so erratically darted through a mind that contrived to be dull when any thing honest was addressed to its apprehension, he instantly divined that his real name of Losely was worth something. He had no idea of resuming — was, indeed, at that time anxious altogether to ignore and eschew it; but he had a right to it, and a man's rights are not to be resigned for nothing. Accordingly, he said with some asperity, "I shall resume my family name whenever I choose it. If Mr. Darrell does not like his dauguter to be called Mrs. Jasper Losely — or all the malignant tittle-tattle which my poor father's unfortunate trial might provoke — he must, at least, ask me as a favor to retain the name I have temporarily adopted — a name in my family, Sir. A Losely married a Hammond, I forget when — generations ago — you'll see it in the Baronetage. My grandfather, Sir Julian, was not a crack lawyer, but he was a baronet of as good birth as any in the country; and my father, Sir" — (Jasper's voice trembled) — "my father," he repeated, fiercely striking his clenched hand on the table, "was a gentleman every inch of his body; and I'll pitch any man out of the window who says a word to the contrary!"

"Sir," said Mr. Gotobed, shrinking toward the bell-pull, "I think, on the whole, I had better see your solicitor."

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Jasper cooled down at that suggestion; and, with a slight apology for natural excitement, begged to know what Mr. Gotobed wished to propose. To make an end of this part of the story, after two or three interviews, in which the two negotiators learned to understand each other, a settlement was legally completed, by which the sum of £10,000 was inalienably settled on Matilda, and her children by her marriage with Jasper; in case he survived her, the interest was to be his for life—in case she died childless, the capital would devolve to himself at Darrell's decease. Meanwhile, Darrell agreed to pay £500 a year, as the interest of the £10,000 at five per cent., to Jasper Hammond, or his order, provided always that Jasper and his wife continued to reside together, and fixed that residence abroad.

By a private verbal arrangement, not even committed to writing, to this sum was added another £200 a year, wholly at Darrell's option and discretion. It being clearly comprehended that these words meant so long as Mr. Hammond kept his own secret, and so long, too, as he forbore directly, or indirectly, to molest, or even to address the person at whose pleasure it was held. On the whole, the conditions to Jasper were sufficiently favorable: he came into an income immeasurably beyond his right to believe that he should ever enjoy; and sufficient — well managed — for even a fair share of the elegances as well as comforts of life, to a young couple blessed in each other's love, and remote from the horrible taxes and emulous gentilities of this opulent England, where, out of fear to be thought too poor, nobody is ever too rich.

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Matilda wrote no more to Darrell. But some months afterward he received an extremely well-expressed note in French, the writer whereof represented herself as a French lady, who had very lately seen Madame Hammond — was now in London but for a few days, and had something to communicate, of such importance as to justify the liberty she took in requesting him to honor her with a visit. After some little hesitation, Darrell called on this lady. Though Matilda had forfeited his affection, he could not contemplate her probable fate without painful anxiety. Perhaps Jasper had ill-used her—perhaps she had need of shelter elsewhere. Though that shelter could not again be under a father's roof—and though Darrell would have taken no step to separate her from the husband she had chosen, still, in secret, he would have felt comparative relief and ease had she herself sought to divide her fate from one whose path downward in dishonor his penetration instinctively divined. With an idea that some communication might be made to him, to which he might reply that Matilda, if compelled to quit her husband, should never want the home and subsistence of a gentlewoman, he repaired to the house (a handsome house in a quiet street, temporarily occupied by the French lady). A tall *chasseur*, in full costume, opened the door — a page ushered him into the drawing-room. He saw a lady—young—and with all the grace of a *Parisienne* in her manner — who, after some exquisitely-turned phrases of excuse, showed him (as a testimonial of the intimacy between herself and Madame

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Hammond) a letter she had received from Matilda, in a very heart-broken, filial strain, full of professions of penitence—of a passionate desire for her father's forgiveness —but far from complaining of Jasper, or hinting at the idea of deserting a spouse, with whom, but for the haunting remembrance of a beloved parent, her lot would be blessed indeed. Whatever of pathos was deficient in the letter, the French lady supplied by such apparent fine feeling, and by so many touching little traits of Matilda's remorse, that Darrell's heart was softened in spite of his reason. He went away, however, saying very little, and intending to call no more. But another note came. The French lady had received a letter from a mutual friend—"Matilda," she feared, "was dangerously ill." This took him again to the house, and the poor French lady seemed so agitated by the news she had heard —and yet so desirous not to exaggerate nor alarm him needlessly, that Darrell suspected his daughter was really dying, and became nervously anxious himself for the next report. Thus, about three or four visits in all necessarily followed the first one. Then Darrell abruptly closed the intercourse, and could not be induced to call again. Not that he for an instant suspected that this amiable lady, who spoke so becomingly, and whose manners were so high-bred, was other than the well-born Baroness she called herself, and looked to be, but partly because, in the last interview, the charming *Parisienne* had appeared a little to forget Matilda's alarming illness, in a, not forward but still, coquettish desire to center his

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attention more upon herself; and the moment she did so, he took a dislike to her which he had not before conceived; and partly because his feelings having recovered the first effect which the vision of a penitent pining, dying daughter could not fail to produce, his experience of Matilda's duplicity and falsehood made him discredit the penitence, the pining, and the dying. The Baroness might not wilfully be deceiving him — Matilda might be wilfully deceiving the Baroness. To the next note, therefore, dispatched to him by the feeling and elegant foreigner, he replied but by a dry excuse — a stately hint that family matters could never be satisfactorily discussed except in family councils, and that if her friend's grief or illness were really in any way occasioned by a belief in the pain her choice of life might have inflicted on himself, it might comfort her to know that the pain had subsided, and that his wish for her health and happiness was not less sincere, because henceforth he could neither watch over the one nor anminister to the other. To this note, after a day or two, the Baroness replied by a letter so beautifully worded, I doubt whether Madame de Sévigné could have written in purer French, or Madame de Staël with a finer felicity of phrase. Stripped of the graces of diction, the substance was but small: "Anxiety for a friend so beloved — so unhappy — more pitied even than before, now that the Baroness had been enabled to see how fondly a daughter must idolize a father in the man whom a nation revered! — (here two lines devoted to compliment personal) — compelled by that anxiety to quit

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even sooner than she had first intended the metropolis of that noble country," etc. — (here four lines devoted to compliment national) — and then proceeding through some charming sentences about patriot altars and domestic hearths, the writer suddenly checked herself—"would intrude no more on time sublimely dedicated to the human race—and concluded with the assurance of sentiments the most *distinguées.*" Little thought Darrell that this complimentary stranger, whom he never again beheld, would exercise an influence over that portion of his destiny which then seemed to him most secure from evil; toward which, then, he looked for the balm to every wound—the compensation to every loss!

Darrell heard no more of Matilda, till, not long afterward, her death was announced to him. She had died from exhaustion shortly after giving birth to a female child. The news came upon him at a moment when, from other causes—(the explanation of which, forming no part of his confidence to Alban, it will be convenient to reserve) — his mind was in a state of great affliction and disorder—when he had already buried himself in the solitudes of Fawley — ambition resigned and the world renounced—and the intelligence saddened and shocked him more than it might have done some months before. If, at that moment of utter bereavement, Matilda's child had been brought to him — given up to him to rear — would he have rejected it? would he have forgotten that it was a felon's grandchild? I dare not say. But his pride was not put to such a trial. One day he received a packet

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from Mr. Gotobed, inclosing the formal certificates of the infant's death, which had been presented to him by Jasper, who had arrived in London for that melancholy purpose, with which he combined a pecuniary proposition. By the death of Matilda and her only child, the sum of £10,000 absolutely reverted to Jasper in the event of Darrell's decease. As the interest meanwhile was continued to Jasper, that widowed mourner suggested "that it would be a great boon to himself and no disadvantage to Darrell if the principal were made over to him at once. He had been brought up originally to commerce. He had abjured all thoughts of resuming such vocation during his wife's life-time, out of that consideration for her family and ancient birth which motives of delicacy imposed. Now that the connection with Mr. Darrell was dissolved, it might be rather a relief than otherwise to that gentleman to know that a son-in-law so displeasing to him was finally settled, not only in a foreign land, but in a social sphere, in which his very existence would soon be ignored by all who could remind Mr. Darrell that his daughter had once a husband. An occasion that might never occur again now presented itself. A trading firm at Paris, opulent, but unostentatiously quiet in its mercantile transactions, would accept him as a partner could he bring to it the additional capital of £10,000." Not without dignity did Jasper add, "that since his connection had been so unhappily distasteful to Mr. Darrell, and since the very payment, each quarter, of the interest on the sum in question must in itself keep alive the unwelcome remem-

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brance of that connection, he had the less scruple in making a proposition which would enable the eminent personage who so disdained his alliance to get rid of him altogether." Darrell closed at once with Jasper's proposal, pleased to cut off from his life each tie that could henceforth link it to Jasper's, nor displeased to relieve his hereditary acres from every shilling of the marriage portion which was imposed on it as a debt, and associated with memories of unmingled bitterness. Accordingly, Mr. Gotobed, taking care first to ascertain that the certificates as to the poor child's death were genuine, accepted Jasper's final release of all claim on Mr. Darrell's estate. There still, however, remained the £200 a-year which Jasper had received during Matilda's life, on the tacit condition of remaining Mr. Hammond, and not personally addressing Mr. Darrell. Jasper inquired "if that annuity was to continue?" Mr. Gotobed referred the inquiry to Darrell, observing that the object for which this extra allowance had been made was rendered nugatory by the death of Mrs. Hammond and her child; since Jasper henceforth could have neither power nor pretext to molest Mr. Darrell, and that it could signify but little what name might in future be borne by one whose connection with the Darrell family was wholly dissolved. Darrell impatiently replied, "That nothing having been said as to the withdrawal of the said allowance in case Jasper became a widower, he remained equally entitled, in point of honor, to receive that allowance, or an adequate equivalent."

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This answer being intimated to Jasper, that gentleman observed "that it was no more than he had expected from Mr. Darrell's sense of honor," and apparently quite satisfied, carried himself and his £10,000 back to Paris. Not long after, however, he wrote to Mr. Gotobed that "Mr. Darrell, having alluded to an equivalent for the £200 a-year allowed to him, evidently implying that it was as disagreeable to Mr. Darrell to see that sum entered quarterly in his banker's books, as it had to see there the quarterly interest of the £10,000, so Jasper might be excused in owning that he should prefer an equivalent. The commercial firm to which he was about to attach himself required a somewhat larger capital on his part than he had anticipated, etc., etc. Without presuming to dictate any definite sum, he would observe that £1500, or even £1000, would be of more avail to his views and objects in life than an annuity of £200 a year, which, being held only at will, was not susceptible of a temporary loan." Darrell, wrapped in thoughts wholly remote from recollections of Jasper, chafed at being thus recalled to the sense of that person's existence, wrote back to the solicitor who transmitted to him this message, "that an annuity held on his word was not to be calculated by Mr. Hammond's notions of its value. That the £200 a-year should therefore be placed on the same footing as the £500 a-year that had been allowed on a capital of £10,000; that accordingly it might be held to represent a principal of £4000, for which he inclosed a check, begging Mr. Gotobed not only to make

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Mr. Hammond fully understand that there ended all possible accounts or communication between them, but never again to trouble him with any matters whatsoever in reference to affairs that were thus finally concluded." Jasper, receiving the £4000, left Darrell and Gotobed in peace till the following year. He then addressed to Gotobed an exceedingly plausible business-like letter. "The firm he had entered, in the silk trade, was in the most flourishing state — an opportunity occurred to purchase a magnificent mulberry plantation in Provence, with all requisite *magnanières*, etc., which would yield an immense increase of profit. That if, to insure him to have a share in this lucrative purchase, Mr. Darrell could accommodate him for a year with a loan of £2000 or £3000, he sanguinely calculated on attaining so high a position in the commercial world, as, though it could not render the recollection of his alliance more obtrusive to Mr. Darrell, would render it less humiliating."

Mr. Gotobed, in obedience to the peremptory instructions he had received from his client, did not refer this letter to Darrell, but having occasion at that time to visit Paris on other business he resolved (without calling on Mr. Hammond) to institute there some private inquiry into that rising trader's prospects and status. He found, on arrival at Paris, these inquiries difficult. No one in either the *beau monde* or in the *haut commerce* seemed to know anything about this Mr. Jasper Hammond. A few fashionable English *roués* remembered to have seen once or twice during Matilda's life, and shortly after her

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decease, a very fine-looking man shooting meteoric across some equivocal *salons*, or lounging in the *Champs Elysées*, or dining at the *Café de Paris;* but of late that meteor had vanished. Mr. Gotobed, then cautiously employing a commissioner to gain some information of Mr. Hammond's firm at the private residence from which Jasper addressed his letter, ascertained that in that private residence Jasper did not reside. He paid the porter to receive occasional letters, for which he called or sent; and the porter, who was evidently a faithful and discreet functionary, declared his belief that Monsieur Hammond lodged in the house in which he transacted business, though, where was the house, or what was the business, the porter observed, with well-bred implied rebuke, "Monsieur Hammond was too reserved to communicate, he himself too incurious to inquire." At length Mr. Gotobed's business, which was, in fact, a commission from a distressed father to extricate an imprudent son, a mere boy, from some unhappy associations, having brought him into the necessity of seeing persons who belonged neither to the *beau monde* nor to the *haut commerce*, he gleaned from them the information he desired. Mr. Hammond lived in the very heart of a certain circle in Paris, which but few Englishmen ever penetrate. In that circle Mr. Hammond had, on receiving his late wife's dowry, became the partner in a private gambling hell; in that hell had been ingulfed all the moneys he had received — a hell that ought to have prospered with him, if he could have economized his villanous gains. His

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senior partner in that firm retired into the country with a fine fortune — no doubt the very owner of those mulberry plantations which were now on sale! But Jasper scattered Napoleons faster than any *croupier* could rake them away. And Jasper's natural talent for converting solid gold into thin air had been assisted by a lady, who, in the course of her amiable life, had assisted many richer men than Jasper to lodgings in St. Pelagie, or cells in the Maison des Fous. With that lady he had become acquainted during the life-time of his wife, and it was supposed that Matilda's discovery of this *liaison* had contributed perhaps to the illness which closed in her decease; the name of that lady was Gabrielle Desmarets. *She* might still be seen daily at the Bois de Boulogne, nightly at opera-house or theatre; *she* had apartments in the Chaussée d'Antin, far from inaccessible to Mr. Gotobed, if he coveted the honor of her acquaintance. But Jasper was less before an admiring world. He was supposed now to be connected with another gambling-house of lower grade than the last, in which he had contrived to break his own bank, and plunder his own till. It was supposed also that he remained good friends with Mademoiselle Desmarets; but if he visited her at her house, he was never to be seen there. In fact, his temper was so uncertain, his courage so dauntless, his strength so prodigious, that gentlemen who did not wish to be thrown out of a window, or hurled down a stair-case, shunned any salon or boudoir in which they had a chance to encounter him. Mademoiselle Desmarets had thus

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been condemned to the painful choice between his society and that of nobody else, or that of any body else with the rigid privation of his. Not being a turtle-dove, she had chosen the latter alternative. It was believed, however, that if ever Gabrielle Desmarets had known the weakness of a kind sentiment, it was for this turbulent lady-killer; and that, with a liberality she had never exhibited in any other instance, when she could no longer help him to squander, she would still, at a pinch, help him to live; though, of course, in such a reverse of the normal laws of her being, Mademoiselle Desmarets set those bounds on her own generosity, which she would not have imposed upon his, and had said with a sigh: "I could forgive him if he beat me and beggared my friends; but to beat my friends and to beggar me — *that* is not the kind of love which makes the world go round!"

Scandalized to the last nerve of his respectable system by the information thus gleaned, Mr. Gotobed returned to London. More letters from Jasper — becoming urgent, and at last even insolent — Mr. Gotobed, worried into a reply, wrote back shortly "that he could not even communicate such applications to Mr. Darrell, and that he must peremptorily decline all further intercourse, epistolary or personal, with Mr. Hammond."

Darrell, on returning from one of the occasional rambles on the Continent, "remote, unfriended, melancholy," by which he broke the monotony of his Fawley life, found a letter from Jasper, not fawning, but abrupt, addressed to himself, complaining of Mr. Gotobed's improper tone, re-

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questing pecuniary assistannce, and intimating that he could in return communicate to Mr. Darrell an intelligence that would give him more joy than all his wealth could purchase. Darrell inclosed that note to Mr. Gotobed; Mr. Gotobed came down to Fawley to make those revelations of Jasper's mode of life which were too delicate, or too much the reverse, to commit to paper. Great as Darrell's disgust at the memory of Jasper had hitherto been, it may well be conceived how much more bitter became that memory now. No answer was, of course, vouchsafed to Jasper, who, after another extremely forcible appeal for money, and equally enigmatical boast of the pleasurable information it was in his power to bestow, relapsed into sullen silence.

One day, somewhat more than five years after Matilda's death, Darrell, coming in from his musing walks, found a stranger waiting for him. This stranger was William Losely, returned from penal exile; and while Darrell, on hearing this announcement, stood mute with haughty wonder that such a visitor could cross the threshold of his father's house, the convict began what seemed to Darrell a story equally audacious and incomprehensible — the infant Matilda had borne to Jasper, and the certificates of whose death had been so ceremoniously produced and so prudently attested, lived still! Sent out to nurse as soon as born, the nurse had in her charge another babe, and this last was the child who had died and been buried as Matilda Hammond's. The elder Losely went on to stammer out a hope that his son was not at the time

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aware of the fraudulent exchange, but had been deceived by the nurse — that it had not been a premeditated imposture of his own to obtain his wife's fortune.

When Darrell came to this part of his story, Alban Morley's face grew more seriously interested. "Stop!" he said; "William Losely assured you of his own conviction that this strange tale was true. What proofs did he volunteer?"

"Proofs! Death, man, do you think that at such moments I was but a bloodless lawyer, to question and cross-examine? I could but bid the impostor leave the house which his feet polluted."

Alban heaved a sigh, and murmured, too low for Darrell to overhear, "Poor Willy!" then aloud, "But, my dear friend, bear with me one moment. Suppose that, by the arts of this diabolical Jasper, the exchange really had been effected, and a child to your ancient line lived still, would it not be a solace, a comfort —"

"Comfort!" cried Darrell, "comfort in the perpetuation of infamy! The line I promised my father to restore to its rank in the land, to be renewed in the grandchild of a felon! — in the child of the yet viler sharper of a hell! — You, gentleman and soldier, call that thought — 'comfort?' Oh, Alban! — out on you! Fie! fie! No! — leave such a thought to the lips of a William Losely! He indeed, clasping his hands, faltered forth some such word; he seemed to count on my forlorn privation of kith and kindred — no heir to my wealth — no representative of my race — would I deprive myself of — ay — your

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very words — of a solace — a comfort! He asked me, at least, to inquire."

"And you answered?"

"Answered so as to quell and crush in the bud all hopes in the success of so flagrant a falsehood — answered: 'Why inquire? Know that, even if your tale were true, I have no heir, no representative, no descendant in the child of Jasper — the grandchild of William — Losely. I can at least leave my wealth to the son of Charles Haughton. True, Charles Haughton was a spendthrift — a gamester; but he was neither a professional cheat nor a convicted felon.'"

"You said that — oh, Darrell!"

The Colonel checked himself. But for Charles Haughton, the spendthrift and gamester, would William Losely have been the convicted felon? He checked that thought, and hurried on —"And how did William Losely reply?"

"He made no reply—he skulked away without a word."

Darrell then proceeded to relate the interview which Jasper had forced on him at Fawley during Lionel's visit there — on Jasper's part, an attempt to tell the same tale as William had told — on Darrell's part, the same scornful refusal to hear it out. "And," added Darrell, "the man, finding it thus impossible to dupe my reason, had the inconceivable meanness to apply to me for alms. I could not better show the disdain in which I held himself and his story than in recognizing his plea as a mendicant. I threw my purse at his feet, and so left him.

"But," continued Darrell, his brow growing darker

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and darker, "but wild and monstrous as the story was, still the idea that it MIGHT be true—a supposition which derived its sole strength from the character of Jasper Losely — from the interest he had in the supposed death of a child that alone stood between himself and the money he longed to grasp — an interest which ceased when the money itself was gone, or rather changed into the counter-interest of proving a life that, he thought, would re-establish a hold on me — still, I say, an idea that the story *might* be true, would force itself on my fears, and if so, though my resolution never to acknowledge the child of Jasper Losely as a representative, or even as a daughter, of my house, would of course be immovable— yet it would become my duty to see that her infancy was sheltered, her childhood reared, her youth guarded, her existence amply provided for."

"Right—your plain duty," said Alban, bluntly. "Intricate sometimes are the obligations imposed on us as gentlemen; '*noblesse obligé*' is a motto which involves puzzles for a casuist; but our duties as men are plain — the idea very properly haunted you — and —"

"And I hastened to exorcise the spectre. I left England — I went to the French town in which poor Matilda died — I could not, of course, make formal or avowed inquiries of a nature to raise into importance the very conspiracy (if conspiracy there were) which threatened me. But I saw the physician who had attended both my daughter and her child — I saw those who had seen them both when living — seen them both when dead. The doubt on

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my mind was dispelled — not a pretext left for my own self-torment The only person needful in evidence whom I failed to see was the nurse to whom the infant had been sent. She lived in a village some miles from the town— I called at her house—she was out. I left word I should call the next day—I did so—she had absconded. I might, doubtless, have traced her, but to what end, if she were merely Jasper's minion and tool? Did not her very flight prove her guilt and her terror? Indirectly I inquired into her antecedents and character. The inquiry opened a field of conjecture, from which I hastened to turn my eyes. This woman had a sister who had been in the service of Gabrielle Desmarets; and Gabrielle Desmarets had been in the neighborhood during my poor daughter's life-time, and just after my daughter's death. And the nurse had had two infants under her charge; the nurse had removed with one of them to Paris — and Gabrielle Desmarets lived in Paris — and, oh, Alban, if there be really in flesh and life a child by Jasper Losely to be forced upon my purse or my pity — is it his child, not by the ill-fated Matilda, but by the vile woman for whom Matilda, even in the first year of wedlock, was deserted? Conceive how credulity itself would shrink appalled from the horrible snare! — I to acknowledge, adopt, proclaim as the last of the Darrells, the adulterous offspring of a Jasper Losely and a Gabrielle Desmarets! — or, when I am in my grave, some claim advanced upon the sum settled by my marriage articles on Matilda's issue, and which, if a child survived, could not have been legally transferred

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to its father — a claim with witnesses suborned — a claim that might be fraudulently established — a claim that would leave the representative — not indeed of my lands and wealth, but, more precious far, of my lineage and blood — in — in the person of — of — "

Darrell paused, almost stifling, and became so pale that Alban started from his seat in alarm.

"It is nothing," resumed Darrell, faintly; "and ill or well, I must finish this subject now, so that we need not reopen it.

"I remained abroad, as you know, for some years. During that time two or three letters from Jasper Losely were forwarded to me; the latest in date more insolent than all preceding ones. It contained demands as if they were rights, and insinuated threats of public exposure, reflecting on myself and my pride — 'He was my son-in-law after all, and if he came to disgrace the world should know the tie.' Enough. This is all I knew until the man who now, it seems, thrusts himself forward as Jasper Losely's friend or agent, spoke to me the other night at Mrs. Haughton's. That man you have seen, and you say that he — "

"Represents Jasper's poverty as extreme; his temper unscrupulous and desperate; that he is capable of any amount of scandal or violence. It seems that though at Paris he has (Poole believes) still preserved the name of Hammond, yet that in England he has resumed that of Losely; seems, by Poole's date of the time on which he, Poole, made Jasper's acquaintance, to have done so after

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his baffled attempt on you at Fawley — whether in so doing he intimated the commencement of hostilities, or whether, as is more likely, the sharper finds it convenient to have one name in one country, and one in another, 'tis useless to inquire; enough that the identity between the Hammond who married poor Matilda and the Jasper Losely whose father was transported, that unscrupulous rogue has no longer any care to conceal. It is true that the revelation of this identity would now be of slight moment to a man of the world — as thick-skinned as myself, for instance; but to you it would be disagreeable — there is no denying that — and therefore, in short, when Mr. Poole advises a compromise, by which Jasper could be secured from want and yourself from annoyance, I am of the same opinion as Mr. Poole is."

"You are?"

"Certainly. My dear Darrell, if in your secret heart there was something so galling in the thought that the man who had married your daughter, though without your consent, was not merely the commonplace adventurer whom the world supposed, but the son of that poor dear —I mean, that rascal who was transported. Jasper, too, himself a cheat and a sharper—if this galled you so that you have concealed the true facts from myself, your oldest friend, till this day—if it has cost you even now so sharp a pang to divulge the true name of that Mr. Hammond, whom our society never saw, whom even gossip has forgotten in connection with yourself—how intolerable would be your suffering to have this man watching for you in

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the streets, some wretched girl in his hand, and crying out, 'A penny for your son-in-law and your grandchild!' Pardon me — I must be blunt. You can give him to the police — send him to the tread-mill. Does that mend the matter? Or, worse still, suppose the man commits some crime that fills all the newspapers with his life and adventures, including, of course, his runaway marriage with the famous Guy Darrell's heiress — no one would blame you, no one respect you less; but do not tell me that you would not be glad to save your daughter's name from being coupled with such a miscreant's, at the price of half your fortune."

"Alban," said Darrell, gloomily, "you can say nothing on this score that has not been considered by myself. But the man has so placed the matter that honor itself forbids me to bargain with him for the price of my name. So long as he threatens, I can not buy off a threat — so long as he persists in a story by which he would establish a claim on me on behalf of a child whom I have every motive, as well as every reason, to disown as inheriting my blood — whatever I bestowed on himself would seem like hush-money to suppress that claim."

"Of course — I understand, and entirely agree with you. But if the man retract all threats, confess his imposture in respect to this pretended offspring, and consent to retire for life to a distant colony, upon an annuity that may suffice for his wants, but leave no surplus beyond, to render more glaring his vices, or more effective his powers of evil — if this could be arranged between Mr.

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Poole and myself, I think that your peace might be permanently secured without the slightest sacrifice of honor. Will you leave the matter in my hands, on this assurance — that I will not give this person a farthing except on the conditions I have premised?"

"On these conditions, yes, and most gratefully," said Darrell. "Do what you will. But one favor more; never again speak to me (unless absolutely compelled) in reference to this dark portion of my inner life."

Alban pressed his friend's hand, and both were silent for some moments. Then said the Colonel, with an attempt at cheerfulness, "Darrell, more than ever now do I see that the new house at Fawley, so long suspended, must be finished. Marry again you must! You can never banish old remembrances unless you can supplant them by fresh hopes."

"I feel it — I know it!" cried Darrell, passionately. "And oh! if one remembrance *could* be wrenched away! But it shall — it shall!"

"Ah!" thought Alban, "the remembrance of his former conjugal life!—a remembrance which might well make the youngest and the boldest Benedict shrink from the hazard of a similar experiment."

In proportion to the delicacy, the earnestness, the depth of a man's nature, will there be a something in his character which no male friend can conceive, and a something in the secrets of his life which no male friend can ever conjecture.

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CHAPTER XI.

Our old friend the Pocket Cannibal evinces unexpected patriotism and philosophical moderation, contented with a steak off his own succulent friend in the airs of his own native sky.

Colonel Morley had a second interview with Mr. Poole. It needed not Alban's knowledge of the world to discover that Poole was no partial friend to Jasper Losely; that, for some reason or other, Poole was no less anxious than the Colonel to get that formidable client, whose cause he so warmly advocated, pensioned and packed off into the region most remote from Great Britain, in which a spirit hitherto so restless might consent to settle. And although Mr. Poole had evidently taken offence at Mr. Darrell's discourteous rebuff of his amiable intentions, yet no grudge against Darrell furnished a motive for conduct equal to his Christian desire that Darrell's peace should be purchased by Losely's perpetual exile. Accordingly, Colonel Morley took leave, with a well-placed confidence in Poole's determination to do all in his power to induce Jasper to listen to reason. The Colonel had hoped to learn something from Poole of the elder Losely's present residence and resources. Poole, as we know, could give him there no information. The Colonel also failed to ascertain any particulars relative to that female pretender on whose

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behalf Jasper founded his principal claim to Darrell's aid. And so great was Poole's embarrassment in reply to all questions on that score — Where was the young person? With whom had she lived? What was she like? Could the Colonel see her, and hear her own tale?—that Alban entertained a strong suspicion that no such girl was in existence; that she was a pure fiction and myth; or that, if Jasper were compelled to produce some petticoated fair, she would be an artful baggage hired for the occasion.

Poole waited Jasper's next visit with impatience and sanguine delight. He had not a doubt that the ruffian would cheerfully consent to allow that, on farther inquiry, he found he had been deceived in his belief of Sophy's parentage, and that there was nothing in England so peculiarly sacred to his heart but what he might consent to breathe the freer air of Columbian skies, or even to share the shepherd's harmless life amidst the pastures of auriferous Australia! But, to Poole's ineffable consternation, Jasper declared sullenly that he would not consent to expatriate himself merely for the sake of living.

"I am not so young as I was," said the bravo; "I don't speak of years, but feeling. I have not the same energy; once I had high spirits—they are broken; once I had hope — I have none: I am not up to exertion; I have got into lazy habits. To go into new scenes, form new plans, live in a horrid raw new world, every body round me bustling and pushing—No! that may suit your thin dapper light Hop-o'-my-thumbs! Look at me! See

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how I have increased in weight the last five years — all solid bone and muscle. I defy any four draymen to move me an inch if I am not in the mind to it; and to be blown off to the antipodes as if I were the down of a pestilent thistle, I am not in the mind for *that*, Dolly Poole!"

"Hum!" said Poole, trying to smile. "This is funny talk. You always were a funny fellow. But I am quite sure, from Colonel Morley's decided manner, that you can get nothing from Darrell if you choose to remain in England."

"Well, when I have nothing else left, I may go to Darrell himself, and have that matter out with him. At present I am not up to it. Dolly, don't bore!" And the bravo, opening a jaw strong enough for any carnivorous animal, yawned — yawned much as a bored tiger does in the face of a philosophical student of savage manners in the Zoological Gardens.

"Bore!" said Poole, astounded, and recoiling from that expanded jaw. "But I should have thought no subject could bore you less than the consideration of how you are to live?"

"Why, Dolly, I have learned to be easily contented, and you see at present I live upon you."

"Yes," groaned Poole, "but that can't go on for ever; and, besides, you promised that you would leave me in peace as soon as I had got Darrell to provide for you."

"So I will. Zounds, Sir, do you doubt my word? So I will. But I don't call exile 'a provision' — *Basta!* I

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understand from you that Colonel Morley [illegible] the niggardly £200 a-year Darrell formerly allowed to me, to be paid monthly or weekly, through some agent in Van Diemen's Land, or some such uncomfortable half-way house to Eternity, that was not even in the Atlas when I studied geography at school. But £200 a-year is exactly my income in England, paid weekly too, by your agreeable self, with whom it is a pleasure to talk over old times. Therefore that proposal is out of the question. Tell Colonel Morley, with my compliments, that if he will double the sum, and leave me to spend it where I please, I scorn haggling, and say 'done.' And as to the girl, since I can not find her (which, on penalty of being thrashed to a mummy, you will take care not to let out), I would agree to leave Mr. Darrell free to disown her. But are you such a dolt as not to see that I put the ace of trumps on my adversary's pitiful deuce, if I depose that my own child is not my own child, when all I get for it is what I equally get out of you, with my ace of trumps still in my hands? *Basta!*—I say again *Basta!* It is evidently an object to Darrell to get rid of all fear that Sophy should ever pounce upon him tooth and claw; if he be so convinced that she is not his daughter's child, why make a point of my saying that I told him a fib when I said she was? Evidently, too, he is afraid of my power to harass and annoy him; or why make it a point that I shall only nibble his cheese in a trap at the world's end, stared at by bushmen, and wombats, and rattlesnakes, and alligators, and other American citizens or British settlers?

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£200 a year, and my own wife's father a millionaire! The offer is an insult. Ponder this; put on the screw; make them come to terms which I can do them the honor to accept; meanwhile, I will trouble you for my four sovereigns?"

Poole had the chagrin to report to the Colonel Jasper's refusal of the terms proposed, and to state the counter-proposition he was commissioned to make. Alban was at first surprised, not conjecturing the means of supply, in his native land, which Jasper had secured in the coffers of Poole himself. On sounding the unhappy negotiator as to Jasper's reasons, he surmised, however, one part of the truth — viz., that Jasper built hopes of better terms precisely on the fact that terms had been offered to him at all; and this induced Alban almost to regret that he had made any such overtures, and to believe that Darrell's repugnance to open the door of conciliation a single inch to so sturdy a mendicant, was more worldly-wise than Alban had originally supposed. Yet partly, even for Darrell's own security and peace, from that persuasion of his own powers of management which a consummate man of the world is apt to entertain, and partly from a strong curiosity to see the audacious son of that poor dear rascal Willy, and examine himself into the facts he asserted, and the objects he aimed at, Alban bade Poole inform Jasper that Colonel Morley would be quite willing to convince him, in a personal interview, of the impossibility of acceding to the propositions Jasper had made; and that he should be still more willing to see

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the young person whom Jasper asserted to be the child of his marriage.

Jasper, after a moment's moody deliberation, declined to meet Colonel Morley — partly, indeed, from the sensitive vanity which once had given him delight, and now only gave him pain. Meet thus — altered, fallen, imbruted — the fine gentleman whose calm eye had quelled him in the widow's drawing-room in his day of comparative splendor—that in itself was distasteful to the degenerated bravo. But he felt as if he should be at more disadvantage in point of argument with a cool and wary representative of Darrell's interests than he should be even with Darrell himself. And unable to produce the child whom he ascribed the right to obtrude, he should be but exposed to a fire of cross-questions without a shot in his own locker. Accordingly, he declined, point-blank, to see Colonel Morley; and declared that the terms he himself had proposed were the lowest he would accept. "Tell Colonel Morley, however, that if negotiations fail, *I* shall not fail, sooner or later, to argue my view of the points in dispute with my kind father-in-law, and in person."

"Yes, hang it!" cried Poole, exasperated; "go and see Darrell yourself. He is easily found."

"Ay," answered Jasper, with the hardest look of his downcast sidelong eye — "ay; some day or other it may come to that. I would rather not, if possible. I might not keep my temper. It is not merely a matter of money between us, if we two meet. There are affronts to efface. Banished his house like a mangy dog — treated by a

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jackanapes lawyer like the dirt in the kennel! The Loselys, I suspect, would have looked down on the Darrells fifty years ago; and what if my father was born out of wedlock, is the blood not the same? Does the breed dwindle down for want of a gold ring and priest? Look at me. No; not what I now am; not even as you saw me five years ago; but as I leaped into youth! Was I born to cast sums and nib pens as a City clerk? Aha, my poor father, you were wrong there! Blood will out! Mad devil, indeed, is a racer in a citizen's gig! Spavined, and wind-galled, and foundered—let the brute go at last to the knackers; but by his eye, and his pluck, and his bone, the brute shows the stock that he came from!"

Dolly opened his eyes and — blinked. Never in his gaudy days had Jasper half so openly revealed what, perhaps, had been always a sore in his pride; and his outburst now may possibly aid the reader to a subtler comprehension of the arrogance, and levity, and egotism, which accompanied his insensibility to honor, and had converted his very claim to the blood of a gentleman into an excuse for a cynic's disdain of the very virtues for which a gentleman is most desirous of obtaining credit. But by a very ordinary process in the human mind, as Jasper had fallen lower and lower into the lees and dregs of fortune, his pride had more prominently emerged from the group of the other and more flaunting vices by which, in health and high spirits, it had been pushed aside and outshone.

"Humph!" said Poole, after a pause. "If Darrell

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was as uncivil to you as he was to me, I don't wonder that you owe him a grudge. But even if you do lose temper in seeing him, it might rather do good than not. You can make yourself cursedly unpleasant if you choose it; and perhaps you will have a better chance of getting your own terms if they see you can bite as well as bark! Set at Darrell and worry him; it is not fair to worry nobody but me!"

"Dolly, don't bluster! If I could stand at his door, or stop him in the streets, with the girl in my hand, your advice would be judicious. The world would not care for a row between a rich man and a penniless son-in-law. But an interesting young lady, who calls him grandfather, and falls at his knees, he could not send *her* to hard labor; and if he does not believe in her birth, let the thing but just get into the newspapers, and there are plenty who will; and I should be in a very different position for treating. 'Tis just because, if I meet Darrell again, I don't wish that again it should be all bark and no bite, that I postpone the interview. All your own laziness — exert yourself and find the girl."

"But I can't find the girl, and you know it! And I tell you what, Mr. Losely, Colonel Morley, who is a very shrewd man, does not believe in the girl's existence."

"Does not he! I begin to doubt it myself. But, at all events, you can't doubt of mine, and I am grateful for yours; and since you have given me the trouble of coming here to no purpose, I may as well take the next week's pay in advance — four sovereigns, if you please, Dolly Poole."

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CHAPTER XII.

Another halt — Change of Horses — and a turn on the road.

Colonel Morley, on learning that Jasper declined a personal conference with himself, and that the proposal of an interview with Jasper's alleged daughter was equally scouted or put aside, became still more confirmed in his belief that Jasper had not yet been blessed with a daughter sufficiently artful to produce. And pleased to think that the sharper was thus unprovided with a means of annoyance, which, skilfully managed, might have been seriously harassing; and convinced that when Jasper found no farther notice taken of him, he himself would be compelled to petition for the terms he now rejected, the Colonel dryly informed Poole "that his interference was at an end; that if Mr. Losely, either through himself, or through Mr. Poole, or any one else, presumed to address Mr. Darrell direct, the offer previously made would be peremptorily and irrevocably withdrawn. I myself," added the Colonel, "shall be going abroad very shortly, for the rest of the summer; and should Mr. Losely, in the mean while, think better of a proposal which secures him from want, I refer him to Mr. Darrell's solicitor. To that proposal, according to your account of his destitution, he must come sooner or later; and I am glad to see that he has in yourself so judicious an adviser" — a compliment which by no means consoled the miserable Poole.

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In the briefest words, Alban informed Darrell of his persuasion that Jasper was not only without evidence to support a daughter's claim, but that the daughter herself was still in that part of Virgil's Hades appropriated to souls that have not yet appeared upon the upper earth, and that Jasper himself, although holding back, as might be naturally expected, in the hope of conditions more to his taste, had only to be left quietly to his own meditations in order to recognize the advantages of emigration. Another £100 a-year or so, it is true, he might bargain for, and such a demand might be worth conceding. But, on the whole, Alban congratulated Darrell upon the probability of hearing very little more of the son-in-law, and no more at all of the son-in-law's daughter

Darrell made no comment nor reply. A grateful look, a warm pressure of the hand, and, when the subject was changed, a clearer brow and livelier smile thanked the English Alban better than all words.

CHAPTER XIII.

Colonel Morley shows that it is not without reason that he enjoys his reputation of knowing something about every body.

"WELL met," said Darrell, the day after Alban had conveyed to him the comforting assurances which had taken one thorn from his side — dispersed one cloud in his evening sky. "Well met," said Darrell, encountering

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the Colonel a few paces from his own door. "Pray walk with me as far as the New Road. I have promised Lionel to visit the studio of an artist friend of his, in whom he chooses to find a Raffaelle, and in whom I suppose, at the price of truth, I shall be urbanely compelled to compliment a dauber."

"Do you speak of Frank Vance?"

"The same!"

"You could not visit a worthier man, nor compliment a more promising artist. Vance is one of the few who unite *gusto* and patience, fancy and brush-work. His female heads, in especial, are exquisite, though they are all, I confess, too much like one another. The man himself is a thoroughly fine fellow. He has been much made of in good society, and remains unspoiled. You will find his manner rather off-hand, the reverse of shy; partly, perhaps, because he has in himself the racy freshness and boldness which he gives to his colors; partly, perhaps, also, because he has in his art the self-esteem that patricians take from their pedigree, and shakes a duke by the hand to prevent the duke holding out to him a finger."

"Good," said Darrell, with his rare, manly laugh. "Being shy myself, I like men who meet one half-way. I see that we shall be at our ease with each other."

"And perhaps still more when I tell you that he is connected with an old Eton friend of ours, and deriving great benefit from that connection; you remember poor Sidney Branthwaite?"

"To be sure. He and I were great friends at Eton—

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somewhat in the same position of pride and poverty Of all the boys in the school, we two had the least pocket-money. Poor Branthwaite! I lost sight of him afterward. He went into the Church, got only a curacy, and died young."

"And left a son, poorer than himself, who married Frank Vance's sister."

"You don't say so. The Branthwaites were of good old family; what is Mr. Vance's?"

"Respectable enough. Vance's father was one of those clever men who have too many strings to their bow. He, too, was a painter; but he was also a man of letters, in a sort of a way — had a share in a journal, in which he wrote Criticisms on the Fine Arts. A musical composer, too. Rather a fine gentleman, I suspect, with a wife who was rather a fine lady. Their house was much frequented by artists and literary men; and Vance, in short, was hospitable — his wife extravagant. Believing that posterity would do that justice to his pictures which his contemporaries refused, Vance left to his family no other provision. After selling his pictures and paying his debts, there was just enough left to bury him. Fortunately Sir ——, the great painter of that day, had already conceived a liking to Frank Vance—then a mere boy — who had shown genius from an infant, as all true artists do. Sir —— took him into his studio, and gave him lessons. It would have been unlike Sir ——, who was open-hearted but close-fisted, to give anything else. But the boy contrived to support his mother and sister.

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That fellow, who is now as arrogant a stickler for the dignity of art as you or my Lord Chancellor may be for that of the bar, stooped then to deal clandestinely with fancy-shops, and imitate Watteau on fans. I have now two hand-screens that he painted for a shop in Rathbone Place. I suppose he may have got 10*s.* for them, and now any admirer of Frank's would give £100 apiece for them."

"That is the true soul in which genius lodges, and out of which fire springs," cried Darrell, cordially. "Give me the fire that lurks in the flint, and answers by light the stroke of the hard steel. I'm glad Lionel had won a friend in such a man. Sidney Branthwaite's son married Vance's sister — after Vance had won reputation?"

"No; while Vance was still a boy. Young Arthur Branthwaite was an orphan. If he had any living relations, they were too poor to assist him. He wrote poetry much praised by the critics (they deserve to be hanged, those critics!) — scribbled, I suppose, in old Vance's journal; saw Mary Vance a little before her father died; fell in love with her; and on the strength of a volume of verse, in which the critics all solemnly deposed to his surpassing riches — of imagination, rushed to the altar, and sacrificed a wife to the Muses! Those villanous critics will have a dark account to render in the next world! Poor Arthur Branthwaite! For the sake of our old friend his father, I bought a copy of his little volume. Little as the volume was, I could not read it through."

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"What! — below contempt?"

"On the contrary, above comprehension. All poetry praised by critics now-a-days is as hard to understand as a hieroglyphic. I own a weakness for Pope and common sense. I could keep up with our age as far as Byron; after him, I was thrown out. However, Arthur was declared by the critics to be a great improvement on Byron — more 'poetical in form' — more 'æsthetically artistic' — more 'objective' or 'subjective' (I am sure I forget which, but it was one or the other, nonsensical, and not English) in his views of man and nature. Very possibly. All I know is — I bought the poems, but could not read them; the critics read them, but did not buy. All that Frank Vance could make by painting hand-screens and fans and album scraps he sent, I believe, to the poor poet; but I fear it did not suffice. Arthur, I suspect, must have been publishing another volume on his own account. I saw a Monody on something or other, by Arthur Branthwaite, advertised, and no doubt Frank's fans and hand-screens must have melted into the printer's bill. But the Monody never appeared: the poet died, his young wife too. Frank Vance remains a bachelor, and sneers at gentility — abhors poets — is insulted if you promise posthumous fame — gets the best price he can for his pictures—and is proud to be thought a miser. Here we are at his door."

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CHAPTER XIV.

Romantic Love pathologically regarded by Frank Vance and Alban Morley

VANCE was before his easel, Lionel looking over his shoulder. Never was Darrell more genial than he was that day to Frank Vance. The two men took to each other at once, and talked familiarly as if the retired lawyer and the rising painter were old fellow-travellers along the same road of life. Darrell was really an exquisite judge of art, and his praise was the more gratifying because discriminating. Of course he gave the due meed of panegyric to the female heads, by which the artist had become so renowned. Lionel took his kinsman aside, and, with a mournful expression of face, showed him the portrait by which all those varying ideals had been suggested — the portrait of Sophy as Titania.

"And that is Lionel," said the artist, pointing to the rough outline of Bottom.

"Pish!" said Lionel, angrily. Then turning to Darrell — "This is *the* Sophy we have failed to find, Sir — is it not a lovely face?"

"It is, indeed," said Darrell. "But that nameless refinement in expression — that arch yet tender elegance in the simple, watchful attitude — these, Mr. Vance, must be your additions to the original."

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"No, I assure you, Sir," said Lionel; "besides that elegance, that refinement, there was a delicacy in the look and air of that child, to which Vance failed to do justice. Own it, Frank."

"Reassure yourself, Mr. Darrell," said Vance, "of any fears which Lionel's enthusiasm might excite. He tells me that Titania is in America; yet, after all, I would rather he saw her again — no cure for love at first sight like a second sight of the beloved object after a long absence."

DARRELL (somewhat gravely). "A hazardous remedy— it might kill, if it did not cure."

COLONEL MORLEY. "I suspect, from Vance's manner, that he has tested its efficacy on his own person."

LIONEL. "No, *Mon Colonel* — I'll answer for Vance. *He* in love! Never."

Vance colored — gave a touch to the nose of a Roman senator in the famous classical picture which he was then painting for a merchant at Manchester — and made no reply. Darrell looked at the artist with a sharp and searching glance.

COLONEL MORLEY. "Then all the more credit to Vance for his intuitive perception of philosophical truth. Suppose, my dear Lionel, that we light, one idle day, on a beautiful novel, a glowiug romance — suppose that, by chance, we are torn from the book in the middle of the interest — we remain under the spell of the illusion — we recall the scenes — we try to guess what should have been the sequel — we think that no romance ever was so cap-

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tivating, simply because we were not allowed to conclude it. Well, if, some years afterward, the romance fall again in our way, and we open at the page where we left off, we cry, in the maturity of our sober judgment, 'Mawkish stuff! — is this the same thing that I once thought so beautiful? — how one's tastes do alter!'"

DARRELL. "Does it not depend on the age in which one began the romance?"

LIONEL. "Rather, let me think, Sir, upon the real depth of the interest — the true beauty of the — "

VANCE (interrupting). "Heroine?—Not at all, Lionel. I once fell in love — incredible as it may seem to you — nine years ago last January. I was too poor then to aspire to any young lady's hand — therefore I did not tell my love, but 'let concealment,' et cetera, et cetera. She went away with her mamma to complete her education on the Continent. I remained 'Patience on a monument.' She was always before my eyes — the slenderest, shyest creature — just eighteen. I never had an idea that she could grow any older, less slender, or less shy. Well, four years afterward (just before we made our excursion into Surrey, Lionel), she returned to England, still unmarried. I went to a party at which I knew she was to be — saw her, and was cured."

"Bad case of small-pox, or what?" asked the Colonel, smiling.

VANCE. "Nay; every body said she was extremely improved — that was the mischief — she had improved herself out of my fancy. I had been faithful as wax to

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one settled impression, and when I saw a fine, full-formed, young Frenchified lady, quite at her ease, armed with eye-glass and bouquet and bustle, away went my dream of the slim blushing maiden. The Colonel is quite right, Lionel; the romance once suspended, 'tis a haunting remembrance till thrown again in our way, but complete disillusion if we try to renew it; though I swear that in my case the interest was deep, and the heroine improved in her beauty. So with you and that dear little creature. See her again, and you'll tease me no more to give you that portrait of Titania at watch over Bottom's soft slumbers. All a Mid-summer Night's Dream, Lionel. Titania fades back into the arms of Oberon, and would not be Titania if you could make her — Mrs. Bottom."

CHAPTER XV.

Even Colonel Morley, knowing every body and every thing, is puzzled when it comes to the plain question — "What will he do with it?"

"I AM delighted with Vance," said Darrell, when he and the Colonel were again walking arm in arm. "His is not one of those meagre intellects which have nothing to spare out of the professional line. He has humor. Humor — strength's rich superfluity."

"I like your definition," said the Colonel. "And humor in Vance, though fantastic, is not without subtlety. There was much real kindness in his obvious design to quiz Lionel out of that silly enthusiasm for —"

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"For a pretty child, reared up to be a strolling player," interrupted Darrell. "Don't call it silly enthusiasm. I call it chivalrous compassion. Were it other than compassion, it would not be enthusiasm, it would be degradation. But do you believe, then, that Vance's confession of first love, and its cure, was but a whimsical invention?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Not so. Many a grave truth is spoken jestingly. "I have no doubt that, allowing for the pardonable exaggeration of a *raconteur*, Vance was narrating an episode in his own life."

DARRELL. "Do you think that a grown man, who has ever really felt love, can make a jest of it, and to mere acquaintances?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Yes; if he be so thoroughly cured that he has made a jest of it to himself. And the more lightly he speaks of it, perhaps the more solemnly at one time he felt it. Levity is his revenge on the passion that fooled him."

DARRELL. "You are evidently an experienced philosopher in the lore of such folly. '*Consultus insapientis sapientiæ.*' Yet I can scarcely believe that you have ever been in love."

"Yes, I have," said the Colonel, bluntly, "and very often! Every body at my age has — except yourself. So like a man's observation, *that*," continued the Colonel, with much tartness. "No man ever thinks another man capable of a profound and romantic sentiment!"

DARRELL. "True; I own my shallow fault, and beg you ten thousand pardons. So then you really believe,

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from your own experience, that there is much in Vance's theory and your own very happy illustration? Could we, after many years, turn back to the romance at the page at which we left off, we should —"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Not care a straw to read on! Certainly, half the peculiar charm of a person beloved must be ascribed to locality and circumstance."

DARRELL. "I don't quite understand you."

COLONEL MORLEY. "Then, as you liked my former illustration, I will explain myself by another one, more homely. In a room to which you are accustomed, there is a piece of furniture, or an ornament, which so exactly suits the place, that you say—'The prettiest thing I ever saw!' You go away — you return — the piece of furniture or the ornament has been moved into another room. You see it there, and you say — 'Bless me, is that the thing I so much admired!" The strange room does not suit it — losing its old associations and accessories, it has lost its charm. So it is with human beings — seen in one place, the place would be nothing without them — seen in another, the place without them would be all the better!"

DARRELL (musingly). "There are some puzzles in life which resemble the riddles a child asks you to solve. Your imagination can not descend low enough for the right guess. Yet, when you are told, you are obliged to say—'How clever!' Man lives to learn."

"Since you have arrived at that conviction," replied Colonel Morley, amused by his friend's gravity, "I hope

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that you will rest satisfied with the experiences of Vance and myself; and that if you have a mind to propose to one of the young ladies whose merits we have already discussed, you will not deem it necessary to try what effect a prolonged absence might produce on your good resolution."

"No!" said Darrell, with sudden animation. "Before three days are over, my mind shall be made up."

"Bravo! — as to whom of the three you would ask in marriage?"

"Or as to the idea of ever marrying again. Adieu. I am going to knock at that door."

"Mr. Vyvyan's! Ah, is it so, indeed? Verily, you are a true Dare-all."

"Do not be alarmed. I go afterward to an exhibition with Lady Adela, and I dine with the Carr Viponts. My choice is not yet made, and my hand is still free."

"His hand still free!" muttered the Colonel, pursuing his walk alone. "Yes — but, three days hence — What will he do with it?"

CHAPTER XVI.

Guy Darrell's Decision.

GUY DARRELL returned home from Carr Vipont's dinner at a late hour. On his table was a note from Lady Adela's father, cordially inviting Darrell to pass

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the next week at his country-house. London was now emptying fast. On the table-tray was a parcel, containing a book which Darrell had lent to Miss Vyvyan some weeks ago, and a note from herself. In calling at her father's house that morning, he had learned that Mr. Vyvyan had suddenly resolved to take her into Switzerland, with the view of passing the next winter in Italy. The room was filled with loungers of both sexes. Darrell had stayed but a short time. The leave-taking had been somewhat formal — Flora unusually silent. He opened her note, and read the first lines listlessly; those that followed, with a changing cheek and an earnest eye. He laid down the note very gently, again took it up, and reperused. Then he held it to the candle, and it dropped from his hand in tinder. "The innocent child," murmured he, with a soft paternal tenderness; "she knows not what she writes." He began to pace the room with his habitual restlessness when in solitary thought — often sighing heavily. At length his face cleared — his lips became firmly set. He summoned his favorite servant. "Mills," said he, "I shall leave town on horseback as soon as the sun rises. Put what I may require for a day or two into the saddle-bags. Possibly, however, I may be back by dinner-time. Call me at five o'clock, and then go round to the stable. I shall require no groom to attend me."

The next morning, while the streets were deserted, no houses as yet astir, but the sun bright, the air fresh, Guy Darrell rode from his door. He did not return the same

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day, nor the next, nor at all. But, late in the evening of the second day, his horse, reeking-hot and hard-ridden, stopped at the porch of Fawley Manor-House; and Darrell flung himself from the saddle, and into Fairthorn's arms. "Back again — back again — and to leave no more!" said he, looking round: "*Spes et Fortuna valete!*"

CHAPTER XVII.

A Man's Letter — unsatisfactory and provoking as a man's letters always are.

Guy Darrell to Colonel Morley.

FAWLEY MANOR-HOUSE, *August* 19, 18—.

I HAVE decided, my dear Alban. I did not take three days to do so, though the third day may be just over ere you learn my decision. I shall never marry again. I abandon that last dream of declining years. My object in returning to the London world was to try whether I could not find, among the fairest and most attractive women that the world produces — at least to an English eye—some one who could inspire me with that singleness of affection which could alone justify the hope that I might win, in return, a wife's esteem and a contented home. That object is now finally relinquished, and with it all idea of resuming the life of cities. I might have re-entered a political career, had I first secured to myself

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a mind sufficiently serene and healthful for duties that need the concentration of thought and desire. Such a state of mind I can not secure. I have striven for it; I am baffled. It is said that politics are a jealous mistress — that they require the whole man. The saying is not invariably true in the application it commonly receives — that is, a politician may have some other employment of intellect, which rather enlarges his powers than distracts their political uses. Successful politicians have united with great parliamentary toil and triumph legal occupations or literary or learned studies. But politics do require that the heart should be free, and at peace from all more absorbing private anxieties — from the gnawing of a memory or a care, which dulls ambition and paralyzes energy. In this sense politics do require the whole man. If I returned to politics now, I should fail to them, and they to me. I feel that the brief interval between me and the grave has need of repose: I find that repose here. I have therefore given the necessary orders to dismiss the pompous retinue which I left behind me, and instructed my agent to sell my London house for whatever it may fetch. I was unwilling to sell it before — — unwilling to abandon the hope, however faint, that I might yet regain strength for action. But the very struggle to obtain such strength leaves me exhausted more.

You may believe that it is not without a pang—less of pride than of remorse—that I resign unfulfilled the object toward which all my earlier life was so resolutely shaped. The house I had promised my father to refound dies to

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dust in my grave. To my father's blood no heir to my wealth can trace. Yet it is a consolation to think that Lionel Haughton is one on whom my father would have smiled approvingly. At my death, therefore, at least the old name will not die: Lionel Haughton will take and be worthy to bear it. Strange weakness of mine, you will say; but I can not endure the thought that the old name should be quite blotted out of the land. I trust that Lionel may early form a suitable and happy marriage. Sure that he will not choose ignobly, I impose no fetters on his choice.

One word only on that hateful subject, confided so tardily to your friendship, left so thankfully to your discretion. Now that I have once more buried myself in Fawley, it is very unlikely that the man it pains me to name will seek me here. If he does, he can not molest me as if I were in the London world. Continue, then, I pray you, to leave him alone. And in adopting your own shrewd belief that, after all, there is no such child as he pretends to claim, my mind becomes tranquillized on all that part of my private griefs.

Farewell, old school-friend! Here, so far as I can foretell—here, where my life began, it returns, when Heaven pleases, to close. Here I could not ask you to visit me: what is rest to me would be loss of time to you. But in my late and vain attempt to re-enter that existence in which you have calmly and wisely gathered round yourself "all that should accompany old age — honor, love, obedience, troops of friends" — nothing so repaid the effort—nothing now so pleasantly remains to recollection

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—as the brief renewal of that easy commune which men like me never know, save with those whose laughter brings back to them a gale from the old play-ground. "*Vive, vale;*" I will not add, "*Sis memor mei.*" So many my obligations to your kindness, that you will be forced to remember me whenever you recall the *not* "painful subjects" of early friendship and lasting gratitude. Recall only those when reminded of

GUY DARRELL.

CHAPTER XVIII.

No coinage in circulation so fluctuates in value as the worth of a Marriageable Man.

COLONEL MORLEY was not surprised (*that*, we know, he could not be, by any fresh experience of human waywardness and caprice), but much disturbed and much vexed by the unexpected nature of Darrell's communication. Schemes for Darrell's future had become plans of his own. Talk with his old school-fellow had, within the last three months, entered into the pleasures of his age. Darrell's abrupt and final renunciation of this social world made at once a void in the business of Alban's mind, and in the affections of Alban's heart. And no adequate reason assigned for so sudden a flight and so morbid a resolve! Some tormenting remembrance — some rankling grief—distinct from those of which Alban was cognizant, those in which he had been consulted, was implied but by vague and general hints. But what was

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the remembrance of the grief, Alban Morley, who knew every thing, was quite persuaded that Darrell would never suffer him to know. Could it be in any way connected with those three young ladies to whom Darrell's attentions had been so perversely impartial? The Colonel did not fail to observe that to those young ladies Darrell's letter did not even allude. Was it not possible that he had really felt for one of them a deeper sentiment than a man advanced in years ever likes to own even to his nearest friend—hazarded a proposal, and met with a rebuff? If so, Alban conjectured the female culprit by whom the sentiment had been inspired and the rebuff administered. "That mischievous kitten, Flora Vyvyan," growled the Colonel. "I always felt that she had the claws of a tigress under that *patte de velours!*" Roused by this suspicion, he sallied forth to call on the Vyvyans. Mr. Vyvyan, a widower, one of those quiet gentlemanlike men who sit much in the drawing-room and like receiving morning visitors, was at home to him. "So Darrell has left town for the season," said the Colonel, pushing straight to the point.

"Yes," said Mr. Vyvyan. "I had a note from him this morning, to say he had renounced all hope of—"

"What?" cried the Colonel.

"Joining us in Switzerland. I am so sorry. Flora still more sorry. She is accustomed to have her own way, and she had set her heart on hearing Darrell read 'Manfred' in sight of the Jung Frau!"

"Um," said the Colonel. "What might be sport to her might be death to him. A man at his age is not too

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old to fall in love with a young lady of hers. But he is too old not to be extremely ridiculous to *such* a young lady if he does."

"Colonel Morley—Fie!" cried an angry voice behind him. Flora had entered the room unobserved. Her face was much flushed, and her eyelids looked as if tears had lately swelled beneath them, and were swelling still.

"What have I said to merit your rebuke!" asked the Colonel, composedly.

"Said! Coupled the thought of ridicule with the name of Mr. Darrell!"

"Take care, Morley," said Mr. Vyvyan, laughing. "Flora is positively superstitious in her respect for Guy Darrell; and you can not offend her more than by implying that he is mortal. Nay, child, it is very natural. Quite apart from his fame, there is something in that man's familiar talk, or rather, perhaps, in the very sound of his voice, which makes most other society seem flat and insipid. I feel it myself. And when Flora's young admirers flutter and babble round her—just after Darrell has quitted his chair beside her — they seem very poor company. I'm sure, Flora," continued Vyvyan, kindly, "that the mere acquaintance of such a man has done you a great deal of good; and I am now in great hopes that, whenever you marry, it will be a man of sense."

"Um!" again said the Colonel, eyeing Flora aslant, but with much attention. "How I wish, for my friend's sake, that he was of an age which inspired Miss Vyvyan with less — veneration!"

Flora turned her back on the Colonel, looking out of

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the window, and her small foot beating the ground with nervous irritation.

"It was given out that Darrell intended to marry again," said Mr. Vyvyan. "A man of that sort requires a very superior, highly-educated woman; and if Miss Carr Vipont had been a little more of his age she would have just suited him. But I am patriot enough to hope that he will remain single, and have no wife but his country, like Mr. Pitt."

The Colonel having now satisfied his curiosity, and assured himself that Darrell was, there at least, no rejected suitor, rose and approached Flora to make peace, and to take leave. As he held out his hand, he was struck with the change in a countenance usually so gay in its aspect — it spoke of more than dejection, it betrayed distress; when she took his hand she retained it, and looked into his eyes wistfully; evidently there was something on her mind which she wished to express, and did not know how. At length she said in a whisper, "You are Mr. Darrell's most intimate friend; I have heard him say so. Shall you see him soon?"

"I fear not; but why?"

"Why? you, his friend; do you not perceive that he is not happy? I, a mere stranger, saw it at the first. You should cheer and comfort him; *you* have that right — it is a noble privilege."

"My dear young lady," said the Colonel, touched, "you have a better heart than I thought for. It is true Darrell is not a happy man; but can you give me any message that might cheer him more than an old bache-

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lor's commonplace exhortations to take heart, forget the rains of yesterday, and hope for some gleam of sun on the morrow?"

"No," said Flora, sadly, "it would be a presumption indeed in me to affect the consoler's part; but — (her lips quivered) — but if I may judge by his letter, I may never see him again."

"His letter! He has written to *you*, then, as well as to your father?"

"Yes," said Flora, confused and coloring, "a few lines in answer to a silly note of mine; yes, tell him that I shall never forget his kind counsels, his delicate, indulgent construction of — of — in short, tell him my father is right, and that I shall be better and wiser all my life for the few short weeks in which I have known Guy Darrell."

"What secrets are you two whispering there?" asked Mr. Vyvyan from his easy chair.

"Ask her ten years hence," said the Colonel, as he retreated to the door. "The fairest leaves in the flower are the last that the bud will disclose."

From Mr. Vyvyan the Colonel went to Lord ——'s. His lordship had also heard from Darrell that morning; Darrell declined the invitation to —— Hall; business at Fawley. Lady Adela had borne the disappointment with her wonted serenity of temper, and had gone out shopping. Darrell had certainly not offered his hand in that quarter; had he done so — whether refused or accepted — all persons yet left in London would have heard the news. Thence the Colonel repaired to Carr Vipont's. Lady

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Selina was at home, and exceedingly cross. Carr had been astonished by a letter from Mr. Darrell, dated Fawley — left town for the season without even calling to take leave — a most eccentric man. She feared his head was a little touched — that he knew it, but did not like to own it — perhaps the doctors had told him he must keep quiet, and not excite himself with politics. "I had thought," said Lady Selina, "that he might have felt a growing attachment for Honoria; and, considering the disparity of years, and that Honoria certainly might marry any one, he was too proud to incur the risk of refusal. But I will tell you in confidence, as a relation and dear friend, that Honoria has a very superior mind, and might have overlooked the mere age: congenial tastes — you understand. But on thinking it all over, I begin to doubt whether *that* be the true reason for his running away in this wild sort of manner. My maid tells me that his house-steward called to say that the establishment was to be broken up. That looks as if he had resigned London for good; just, too, when, Carr says, the CRISIS, so long put off, is sure to burst on us. I'm quite sick of clever men — one never knows how to trust them; if they are not dishonest, they are eccentric! I have just been telling Honoria that clever men are, after all, the most tiresome husbands. Well, what makes you so silent? What do you say? Why don't you speak?"

"I am slowly recovering from my shock," said the Colonel. "So Darrell shirks THE CRISIS, and has not even hinted a preference for Honoria, the very girl in all London that would have made him a safe, rational companion. I

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told him so, and he never denied it. But it is a comfort to think he is no loss. Old monster!"

"Nay," said Lady Selina, mollified by so much sympathy, "I don't say he is no loss. Honestly speaking — between ourselves — I think he is a very great loss. An alliance between him and Honoria would have united all the Vipont influence. Lord Montfort has the greatest confidence in Darrell; and if this CRISIS comes, it is absolutely necessary for the Vipont interest that it should find somebody who can speak. Really, my dear Colonel Morley, you who have such an influence over this very odd man should exert it now. One must not be overnice in times of CRISIS; the country is at stake, Cousin Alban."

"I will do my best," said the Colonel; "I am quite aware that an alliance which would secure Darrell's talents to the House of Vipont, and the House of Vipont to Darrell's talents, would — but 'tis no use talking, we must not sacrifice Honoria even on the altar of her country's interest!"

"Sacrifice! Nonsense! The man is not young, certainly; but then, what a grand creature—and so clever!"

"Clever — yes! But that was your very objection to him five minutes ago."

"I forgot the CRISIS. One don't want clever men every day, but there *are* days when one does want them!"

"I envy you that aphorism. But from what you now imply, I fear that Honoria may have allowed her thoughts to settle upon what may never take place; and, if so, she may fret."

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"Fret! a daughter of mine fret!—and of all my daughters, Honoria! A girl of the best-disciplined mind! Fret! what a word—vulgar!"

COLONEL MORLEY. "So it is; I blush for it; but let us understand each other. If Darrell proposed for Honoria, you think, ambition apart, she would esteem him sufficiently for a decided preference."

LADY SELINA. "If there be his doubt, reassure him. He is shy; men of genius are; Honoria *would esteem* him! Till he has actually proposed, it would compromise her to say more even to you."

COLONEL MORLEY. "And if that be not the doubt, and if I ascertain that Darrell has no idea of proposing, Honoria would—"

LADY SELINA. "Despise him. Ah, I see by your countenance that you think I should prepare her. Is it so, frankly?"

COLONEL MORLEY. "Frankly, then. I think Guy Darrell, like many other men, has been so long making up his mind to marry again that he has lost the right moment, and will never find it."

Lady Selina smells at her vinaigrette, and replies in her softest, affectedest, civilest, and crushingest manner—

"*Poor*—DEAR—OLD MAN!"

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME

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